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STRIKERS AND RESPONSIBILITY

WHEN men strike, without Union authority, over a considerable area on a grievance that seems on the face of it readily amenable to the ordinary methods of negotiation, there is obviously more at issue than meets the eye. This is especially clear when the Unions concerned show at least some reluctance to exert their full influence to persuade the men to carry on with their work. The engine drivers and firemen in the North-East area have caused the public considerable inconvenience already, and are threatening to cause still more; and, so far, adjurations to play the game, by observing the rules of negotiation, have made no impression upon them.

Superficially their action has nothing to do with the wages question which is agitating the entire railway world; nor even with the discontents, voiced this week by Mr. Figgins, the N.U.R. General Secretary, at the Labour Party Conference, about the methods of control of the nationalised railway system. Below the surface, however, these three questions are closely connected. The railwaymen, especially the N.U.R., have long been the leading advocates of an effective workers' representation, at all levels, in management; and they have from the first disliked both the various Executives set over them under the Transport Commission and the Commission itself. This dislike "on principle" has been aggravated both by the reception of their wages claims and by the nature of the appointments made to managerial positions since the railways came under public operation. The men are in a mood to regard any particular grievance as a by-product of a system to which, *in toto*, they object. This is the psychological background to the unofficial strikes—not, maybe, their justification, but a factor of which the Government and the Railways Executive will be wise to take full account in deciding how to handle it.

The resentment of railway workers at Board management in which they have only a small share, and the demand—advanced by Mr. Figgins at the Labour Party Conference—for a real part in control, over and above mere "consultation," are alike reactions to the discovery that public ownership, as it is now practised, makes very little difference to the worker's status in industry or to his relation with the managerial officers who are set over him. On this point, miners and railwaymen think largely alike; but they differ about remedies. The miners seem to be determined to keep the N.U.M. free from responsibility for the conduct of their industry, and to handle the question of control from outside the management, as a pressure group. The N.U.R., on the other hand, wants to come in and to take the control largely into its own hands through representatives who will continue to be responsible to it as well as to the Transport Commission, and hence, at several removes, to the Government.

Clearly both courses have their dangers—in the one case irresponsibility and in the other divided loyalty. But it is necessary to face the fact that one or the other must be accepted unless a third solution acceptable to the main body of the workers can be found. It is of no use to expect the workers to co-operate if nationalisation is simply of the "managerial" type. Unless a sense of responsibility is created, Grimethorpes and lodging-turn stoppages will inevitably recur; the men, disillusioned and relieved of fear of the sack, will be even less sensitive to public annoyance. In effect, the Government must devote much more attention than it shows signs of having done in *Labour Believes In Britain* to a search for the best ways of running industries as public services. Apart from the relations of Trade Unions to socialised managements, it must be recognised that "workers' control" is a vague but real aspiration which mere "joint consultation"—confined usually to petty questions of welfare—has so far failed to satisfy. We have removed from Britain's economy the compulsions of unemployment and hunger; but we have not yet substituted that sense of civic responsibility that belongs to real industrial democracy.

The Berlin Side-Issue

Once it was clear that the Big Four in Paris would reach no settlement upon the wider issues of German unity, it was also reasonably certain that they would go no great distance together over Berlin. For Berlin, on a smaller scale, presents the same difficulties as the major question of unified government. Mr. Vyshinsky, it is true, has shifted the Soviet position somewhat nearer to that of the Western Powers, both in the greater question and in the less. He was ready to accept the trizonal economic administration now established in the Western Zones, just as, in the lesser question, he was ready to accept the substance of what now exists in the three Western sectors of Berlin. But he made it plain that Moscow would go as far as this, and grudgingly even so, only if the Eastern Zone and the Eastern sector in Berlin—weight of numbers notwithstanding—were given equality of status with the combined Western Zones (and Western sectors in Berlin), and if this equality were buttressed and protected by the right of Soviet veto. The Western reply, by insisting on majority decision in principle for the greater question and in practice for the less, seems to leave little further room for discussion.

It is against this background that the amazing state of affairs which has now developed in and around Berlin must be seen. While dozens of laden trains stand waiting on the frontiers of the

Western Zones, and others are stopped somewhere on the long haul between Helmstedt and the Berlin borders, the people of Berlin find themselves back to the conditions of the blockade. The ostensible reason for this resumption of blockade conditions is a difference of opinion between the railway administration, controlled by officials from the Eastern Zone, and railway workers who are only too pleased, it would seem, to give vent to anti-Soviet feelings. No doubt there may be substance on both sides of this difference of opinion. But the real substance lies elsewhere—in the determination of the Russians to secure economic control of Berlin, as being part of the economic complex of the Eastern Zone so long as Germany remains divided, and, secondly, to link the development of Western trade with Berlin to that of Western trade with the Eastern Zone—and perhaps with Eastern Europe as a whole. These are matters of high policy. They cannot be dealt with by the military commanders in Berlin, as last week's fruitless negotiations showed once more. It is up to the four Ministers to recognise—at another meeting later this year if compromise proves impossible this month—that they can make real progress over Berlin only in the measure that they reach some ground of agreement over the larger German dispute.

Mediation in Greece

Support for international mediation to stop the Greek civil war continues to grow. The latest adherent is General Plastiras, who appears to envisage much the same sort of solution as Mr. Sofianopoulos—the nomination, that is, of a Centre Government which should act under the supervision of the United Nations or the four Great Powers, proclaim an amnesty and ensure that it was honestly observed, and smooth the way for a new general election. The General offered last week to go to Paris to press this view upon the Foreign Ministers, only to find himself at once refused an exit permit by the Athens Government. Another letter, urging Mr. Bevin to bring forward the question of mediation at the Paris Conference, has meanwhile been sent to the Foreign Secretary by the Union of Democratic Control with the support of 35 Members of Parliament and a number of other distinguished people including Dr. Gooch, Mr. Compton Mackenzie, and Dr. Alex Wood. Whether or not these various proposals for mediation bear fruit, they will have demonstrated at least that there is growing support, both in Greece and in this country, for a constructive policy which should bring this frightful war to an end. When Conservatives like General Plastiras, Liberals like Sofianopoulos, Argiropoulos, and others, and Social-democrats like Askoutsis, all ask for peace through mediation, it is somewhat strange that the British Government at least should persist in turning a deaf ear—on the remarkable pretext that they cannot allow themselves to interfere in Greek domestic affairs.

The Future of Hong Kong

The visit of the Minister of Defence and Service Chiefs to Hong Kong suggests that the Government is thinking of the island in terms of an aircraft carrier rather than of a trading base. This impression that more attention is being given to out-of-date considerations of Colonial strategy than to the problem of terms on which we are to remain in Hong Kong—if we can reach terms with Chinese Communism—is confirmed by Mr. Alexander's talks *en route* at Saigon with the Commanders of the French Army and Air Force, who have been fighting an unsuccessful war for more than three years against Viet Nam. Or did Mr. Alexander learn the lesson from his French colleagues that a country cannot be held against the hostility of the people? Granted that the Labour Government's policy in Hong Kong has reflected its enlightenment in other parts of Asia, that the administration has become more representative of the Chinese people who make up 99 per cent. of the inhabitants, that refuge and freedom to organise and work from Hong Kong was given to Communists and members of the Democratic League—even so, there are few Chinese who do not consider the island as Chinese territory and the British as intruders. Any strategic plan for the defence of Hong Kong must assume that, in the event of a Communist attack from the mainland, a large part of the Chinese population in the town would be hostile to the British and anxious to display good will towards the victorious Communists. This factor of internal hostility falsifies any analogy with the conditions of 1941, and removes any possibility that the island could be defended by force. Nothing could be so disastrous to the British as to make a show of resistance and then to have to scuttle or surrender. In this difficult situation we have made a bad beginning in announcing a ban on political parties with foreign connections—which would seem a comically belated attempt to drive the Communists underground. The response has naturally been a protest from Chinese leaders in Peking couched in the familiar terms of an attack on British "imperialism" and "anti-democratic and anti-Chinese measures." The only intelligent policy before the British is to seek without delay to negotiate realistically with those who are the true leaders of China today. We have real assets, and Communists in Shanghai have made clear they are willing to talk business. As one part of their schemes for the rehabilitation of Shanghai, the Communists have now set up a Foreign Affairs Bureau. Negotiations now on a Ministerial level might provide some other than a precarious strategic basis for discussions about Hong Kong.

O.E.E.C. and the Balance of Payments

Sir Stafford Cripps seems to have got away from the O.E.E.C. discussions without being forced to accept a transferability of European currencies that would have meant for Great Britain a further strain on the sterling-dollar exchange. But he was evidently hard-pressed; and the decision has been only postponed. The difficulties are serious. In the first place, the Americans are set on transferability, with final convertibility into dollars, of European currencies within the O.E.E.C. area; for they regard this as a step towards complete exchange convertibility, which is an objective they simply take for granted. They are not, however, prepared—and indeed cannot be in face of the attitude of Congress—to provide additional dollars to cover this convertibility, so that any dollars granted for this purpose will have to come out of the general dollar aid available for Europe, and will thus reduce the British quota. The second difficulty is that Continental countries are apt to argue that, because in the past Great Britain has bought more from them than it has sold to them, this pattern of trade ought to continue—though, in fact, Great Britain can no longer afford to run a deficit on its payments in Western Europe. Belgium, in particular, wants to be able to acquire sterling freely, and then turn it into dollars—and, were transferability fully accepted, the amount of sterling Belgium might acquire would be very large. How the negotiations will end nobody yet knows; it is at least satisfactory that Sir Stafford has stood out successfully so far against a proposal that might make complete nonsense of any attempt to regain international solvency, and could be to no country's long-run advantage if recovery here were wrecked.

Territorials and Reservists

The House of Commons debate, last Thursday, on the Auxiliary and Reserve Forces Bill must have left many Members wondering whether this measure will not prove to be a further obstacle in the way of (still lagging) recruitment for the Territorial Army. As Mr. Bellenger rightly pointed out, the Secretary for War, unable to attract into the Regular Forces sufficient men to provide trained troops to meet his commitments, actual and potential, over the world, has apparently decided that there is nothing for it but to increase the liabilities both of Reservists and Territorials. In pursuance of this policy, he desires to arrogate to himself powers which Parliament should be hesitant to concede. In future, not only may certain classes of Reservists be recalled in peacetime to full-time service for a year or less without a meeting of Parliament and by the simple fiat of the Secretary of State "when it appears to him that the occasion so requires"; all future members of Territorial or other Auxiliary forces will be liable to be called out, without a Proclamation, in the event of an "apprehended attack." Further, as soon as their unit is actually embodied, they may be sent overseas, regardless of whether Britain itself is directly threatened. It is absurd to argue, as Mr. Arthur Henderson did, that the Secretary of State must have power to call up Reservists and Territorials "without undue public notice": hostile Intelligence is not likely to overlook this sort of preliminary mobilisation. What is objectionable is that it should be supposed that a Minister is entitled to take this sort of action without the circumstances which are held to justify it being laid before Parliament.

Price Maintenance and the Consumer

"Re-sale Price Maintenance"—that is, dictation by a producing firm or trade association of the retail prices at which goods are to be sold—has been for a long time past a familiar practice, not only in the case of branded goods but also over a wide and continually growing range of other merchandise. The Committee on the matter which reported last week does not propose the abolition of the right of the individual firm to prescribe a fixed retail price, but does wish this right to be hedged round with restrictions, and does advocate a forthright attack on price maintenance by trade associations or monopolies, as distinct from individual competing firms. The consumers' old grievance against these practices is now reinforced by the rapid growth of self-service shops; for the fixed price system rules out any price concession when the shopper contributes his own labour in picking out what he (or she) wants. Mr. Harold Wilson, in his statement last Thursday, announced that he would be discussing the report with representatives of the various interests, with a view to the drastic modification of existing practices, but also made it clear that he did not intend to rely merely on voluntary reformation by the offenders, and that he had asked the Monopolies Commission to pay special attention to this aspect of trade practices in the cases they have already been asked to investigate. Mr. Wilson also said categorically that discrimination against the Co-operative Stores, on account of their payments of "divi" to purchasers, must cease altogether, and that the public

must be allowed to reap the benefits of self-service methods in reduced prices. Evidently the trade associations and the big-firm monopolists are in for a warm time, and the Government means to put beyond doubt the sincerity of its attack on "price maintenance" and similar practices in *Labour Believes in Britain*.

The N.C.B. and the Miners.

Doubts whether the present composition of the National Coal Board on the higher administrative level is compatible with peace in the mining industry are bound to be increased by the remarkable speeches delivered last week, in Mr. Gaitskell's presence, during a colliery managers' dinner at Cardiff by two high-ranking N.C.B. officials. After Sir Eric Young had done his best to impede recruitment for the mining industry by stating that demands for increased man-power were only an excuse for the miners' failure to reach output targets, Dr. Reid, Production Director of the Scottish Division, lamented the absence of the traditions of the old companies which used to spur the industry on. If only output per man-shift could be increased by 25 per cent., he is reported to have added, 70,000 miners could be discharged. Many officials of the N.C.B. appear to have reached the defeatist conclusion that European recession will lead to a diminished or, at best, static demand for British coal; but talk of massive redundancy as the fruits of increased effort is calculated to revive throughout the coalfields the latent, corroding fear of unemployment, and thus to defeat all hopes of co-operation by the workers in achieving greater output per shift.

Industrial Assurance

With characteristic scrupulousness, *The Times* has presented a factual examination of industrial assurance, and reserved editorial comment on proposed nationalisation to its leader column. While its policy is "agin it," its objective analysis of the system which exists in the private companies makes a more trenchant case for nationalisation than the Labour Party itself has so far produced. Industrial assurance is a matter of collecting the pennies of the poor, with a force of 86,000 outdoor agents to do the door-knocking. During the depression year of 1934, the number of new policies increased by 11,310,000—"which is almost certainly evidence (adds *The Times*) of competitive pressure upon agents in hard times to sell policies that could not be maintained by their purchasers." Leaving out the rest of the 15 large and 135 small companies in the business, *The Times* has tabulated the lapsed policies of the six largest concerns. Even in the good years before the war, seven policies were "abnormally ended" for every three normally settled. Thus 7,230,000 new policies were sold in 1938. Only 1,730,000 insurances were paid out against 4,770,000 abortive. In 55 per cent. of the latter the money paid in was forfeited. This may help to explain the curious affluence of industrial assurance companies. Out of every £1 of receipts, only 14s. 4½d. is paid out in benefit, and 5s. 0½d. goes in collection. In 1947 the gross receipts of the 15 main offices totalled £139,200,000; of that £99,100,000 went as benefits and £34,700,000 went as expenses. In its leader *The Times* advised the Blackpool Conference to make its leaders think again about nationalising industrial assurance. With *The Times*' own facts before it, that was good advice to delegates. Any of them who had any doubts would, in spite of the ingeniously argued leader, have been confirmed of the need for nationalisation.

THE BONN FACADE

It follows from the failure of the Foreign Ministers to reach agreement in Paris that long-standing partition of Germany is to be one of the governing factors of the contemporary European scene. Quite apart from the profoundly disturbing effect which the dividing of Europe's largest country is certain to have upon the policy and actions of neighbouring States, Europe has now to reckon with the basic instability inherent in this double structure for Germany itself. Some may argue that partition has destroyed all threat from Germany for the time being. So it has; yet the settlement is only deferred. The real battle for Germany only now begins; and it is now, in contrast with the years of Military Government, that the Germans themselves will really take a hand.

Very soon, if the plans of the Western Powers go through, Military Government will be discontinued for two-thirds of the German people, the more effective controls on German behaviour removed, and indirect supervision installed through the offices of High Commissioners with comparatively tiny staffs. Before saluting this withdrawal as a "step forward," the British public, and especially the Labour movement, will do well to take a careful look at those regions of Germany, at least, where their influence can still have some effect. What kind of Germany are they being asked to entrust with this near-sovereignty?

Let us pass over the more obvious weaknesses of Western Germany. The farcical insufficiency of denazification, the absence of any genuine spirit and initiative of democracy, the feebleness of trade union organisation, the renewed confidence and power of the old interests are now generally recognised. These weaknesses are likely to weigh upon the future development of Germany with much less suffocating effect than the economic structure which supports them. For the chance of "democratising" Germany which lay open to the victors after 1945 resided not so much, if at all, in changing the political conventions, in displacing the *forms* of dictatorship by those of democracy—but in changing the fundamental economic structure, the underlying formative influences, of the German State. And it is this chance that the Western Powers, by design or by default, have missed.

Western Germany, it is claimed, has made an amazing recovery since partition was completed in June, 1948, by currency reform. The main ground for this claim is the level of industrial production in the Anglo-American Bizone, which stood at 89 per cent. of that of 1936 last March (in contrast with about 50 per cent. before currency reform). Some figures look remarkably good. Production of electricity and gas reached 134 per cent. of 1936 in March; that of coal 96 per cent., while textiles and clothing touched 88 per cent. Iron and steel still lag behind at little more than 50 per cent., with correspondingly low levels in the mechanical industries; but here, too, progress is being made. Along with this upswing, it is urged, the general conditions of life have greatly eased: food is more plentiful, the shops are packed with good things, controls are being abolished, "free enterprise" has found its feet again. The more romantic reporters, indeed, give us a vision of blooming capitalism under the sway of enlightened ideas about co-operation between capital and labour.

It will be wise to probe a little deeper. And here the splendid vision fades, and another, unpleasant but familiar enough, takes its place. In March the figures for unemployment in the Bizone touched a new summit, with 1,132,100 registered unemployed, or 8.5 per cent. of the whole labour force, while the April figures, still to be officially confirmed, are higher still. A year ago the total was under half a million. Meanwhile, real wages have sharply fallen. The President of the Board of Trade has pointed out that money wages in many German exporting industries are less than two-thirds of the level in this country. There is sound reason to believe that the real purchasing power of these low wages is, even so, little more than 60 per cent. of what it was before the war; the total share of wages in the national income is reliably calculated to have fallen by as much as one-fifth—and it was, of course, already low in 1939. The explanations for this are not hard to find. Currency reform, in the first place, carried with it no capital levy (promises notwithstanding); war profits are more or less intact, while small savings are wiped out, trade union funds swallowed up, and the whole economy balanced heavily in favour of the big *entrepreneurs*. The system of taxation introduced and administered by the conservative economists in Frankfurt (strongly applauded by the Americans) is of a markedly reactionary nature, loading burdens on the poor to the advantage of the rich in a manner which could never come within a mile of acceptance in Britain.

Industrial and commercial monopoly has largely survived, although carefully masked for the time being. Apart from the refusal to dismantle industrial capacity declared surplus by the Western Powers, that has characterised the practice, if not the theory, of Western Military Government, and the similar refusal to transfer basic industries to public ownership (even when, as with the Ruhr coal industry last August, a German parliamentary assembly has voted for this), "decartellisation" has become a mere façade for monopolist survival. The case of I.G. Farben is typical. This chemical empire is scheduled to be taken apart—on paper. Its many interests are to be separated into a large number of individual companies; and the shares of these companies are then to be placed upon the German investment market. Yet it need scarcely be pointed out that the only people in Germany who command the necessary capital to buy these shares in large quantities are the old interests (expropriated, be it said, with compensation) or agents of foreign interests.

Adding up these various factors, and others which might easily be laid beside them, the conclusion can only be that it is monopolist capitalism, and not "Western Germany" *tout court*, which has made an amazing recovery. Here, in textbook clarity, are all the well-known signs. High unemployment; the poor getting much poorer; small firms going bankrupt in increasing numbers—from 18 bankruptcies in the bizonal area last November to 275 in March; the rich growing fewer, but the few confirmed in their wealth and given great occasions for getting richer still; even the surface of life—the misery of the workless compared with the luxury spending of the profiteers into whose hands effective control has fallen—showing the stigmata of classical capitalist over-production. Set this against the background of social and political realities in Western Germany to-day—the bickering of groups and parties which strive first and foremost for the fruits of office; the growing belief that the Western democracies have nothing to offer but anti-Bolshevism, and that this in Germany can only mean some new form of Right-wing

nationalism; the impotence of the trade unions, bereft of funds and led by the same men who suffered defeat in 1933 and have never recovered from their defeatism; the general *malaise* of a society which is suffering from profound demoralisation; and the resultant picture is scarcely one to inspire confidence and hope.

It is a picture which bears more than a little resemblance to that of the early Twenties, when the big industrialists, aided by the mistakes of German Social-democracy, wiped out their war indebtedness by the Great Inflation and laid thereby the foundations for much that followed. And the picture carries with it a stern indictment of the practice of Western policy. Mr. Acheson's claim of April 28 last, in line with those made by Mr. Marshall before him, and constantly by Mr. Bevin—that "our basic aim with respect to the Germans themselves has been to help them make the indispensable adjustments" which "can provide substance and hope for the German people" becomes a mockery in the light of these officially admitted facts. What Bonn has done is to give constitutional sanction and great freedom of action to a pattern of recovery which contradicts most of the great principles of democracy.

Can the indispensable adjustments still be made? Doubtfully. Yet even at this late hour, Western policy can still decisively reverse the economic trend in Western Germany. There is at present no sign that Mr. Bevin or Mr. Acheson intend that it should. Yet not to act towards that end is to throw away the unique chance of securing a peaceful, democratic Germany—in the final analysis, to lose the peace.

PLAIN-SONG IN THE HEART

Blackpool, Tuesday Night.

THERE is one resemblance at least between this Conference and that other Blackpool Conference four years ago. Once again Herbert Morrison and Aneurin Bevan, who last year at Scarborough represented the thesis of consolidation and the antithesis of nationalisation, are working closely together. It was their alliance in 1945 which overcame the doubts of Attlee, Dalton and Harold Clay, and pushed the Executive into breaking up the Coalition Government. In 1949, as they showed in remarkable speeches at Sunday night's public meeting, they have once again postponed their disagreements until after the election. Both are good enough politicians to realise that, in this year's discussions of electoral policy, victory for *either* the Left wing *or* the Right wing would merely weaken the Party; the vital thing is to work out a programme which unites all factions and leaves the second Labour Government a free hand to develop its policy in the light of circumstances. Much better a flaccid debate on *Labour Believes in Britain* than the risk that an awkward electoral commitment might be forced on the Executive. So all the resolutions on Party policy have been dropped, and the two-day debate on the programme will take place without a single vote being taken.

Of course, this does not mean that the differences between the Cripps, Morrison and Bevan clans have suddenly been healed. They are, if anything, sharper than ever; and, when the election is over—whatever its result—they will have to be resolved. But this week, both on the platform and on the floor, the desire is for unity; and the Prime Minister on Tuesday responded to this desire with the best speech I have ever heard him make. Whether as a report on the year's activity in Parliament or as the first shot in the election campaign, it was an unassuming yet brilliant performance, which demonstrated—in sharp contrast with Stafford Cripps' oration a little later—that there is no need to be frigid in order to sound sober, or to ascend into the stratosphere in order to transcend propaganda.

Whenever there is real anxiety about the future—and of that anxiety no one who moved among the delegates this week can have any doubt—the Labour Movement "closes its ranks." In plain language, this means that it becomes even more impatient than usual of critical minorities. Monday's debate on the expulsion of Zilliacus and Solley reached quite a good level at times, but it was more like the obsequies at a funeral than the discussion of a live issue. There was mild indignation among the Constituency Parties when a handful of big Unions voted down the resolution to suspend Standing Orders and permit the criminals a few last words on the scaffold. There was amused admiration for Byng's "adroitness"—to use his own word—in avoiding the extreme penalties of fellow-travelling; and for Benn Levy's crack that, "if Zilliacus was to be expelled for becoming the blue-eyed boy of the Communists, what about Ernest Bevin and the Tories?" But it was Will Nally who expressed what most delegates were feeling (though they were rather shocked to hear it said out loud) when he described Solley's expulsion as "a hygienic operation long overdue," in contrast with Zilly's which he felt was a regrettable necessity. The fact is that Zilliacus has behaved so stupidly that his only defenders were those of us who oppose expulsion on principle. In the Trade Union movement that principle is not admitted, as Sam Watson, of the Durham miners, tried to explain in a very confused winding-up speech from the platform.

Political discipline is something which the Union leaders are ready to enforce. But what about the industrial discipline of the Unions themselves? A few minutes after Zilliacus's expulsion had been ratified by an overwhelming majority, including a large number of constituency votes, Mr. Figgins, of the N.U.R., was at the rostrum threatening most undisciplined behaviour if the Railway Executive did not grant to railwaymen full workers' participation in management. Zilliacus could never say or do anything as harmful to the Labour Movement or as disloyal to its policy as Mr. Figgins in that speech—or for that matter in his whole behaviour during the last fortnight. But few of the delegates seemed to be listening to what he said; and, by the time they read it in their morning newspapers, Mr. Figgins was back in London.

The problem, however, of the wage freeze remains, and Tuesday's debate was intended to contribute to its solution. Since all the big Unions had pledged their support to the Executive in advance, the vote was never in doubt. What mattered was whether the Chancellor could counteract the effect among Trade Unionists of his Budget speech and persuade the rank and file delegate not merely to accept his arguments reluctantly but to propagate them actively when he got home. As I have found in many conversations, there is a gulf between the informed view of the Cabinet and the T.U.C. and the uninformed impatience even of the delegate at Conference. The Chancellor's task was to bridge that gulf. Judged by this standard I am afraid that his speech was a failure. I cannot believe that many Trade Union organisers will make the job of holding wage claims back any easier by retailing it to their members.

The debate which Cripps had to answer was a dreary monotone relieved only by the dramatic intervention of Maurice Webb. In his five minutes he caught at people's hearts, whereas Sir Stafford spent forty-five belabouring their poor heads. Instead of responding directly to Maurice Webb, who had really expressed the feelings of millions of worried people, he relied on a carefully prepared set-piece whose content—a strictly financial analysis—did not correspond with its fiery delivery. Certainly he succeeded in avoiding saying anything which would make things worse. But, though his argument was financially irresistible, it was politically irrelevant. The most characteristic touch was when he argued that the workers must enlarge the national cake before he could consider how it should be divided. Surely one does not need to be a demagogue to admit that *before* the worker enlarges the cake he has the right to be told how a Socialist Chancellor would divide it? But, at Blackpool, Cripps was having no truck with such appeasement of the emotions. Like Brüning, whom he strangely resembles as a politician, he seems to believe that if a financial policy is to be moral, it must be unpalatable, too. His "Song in the Heart" is Anglican and very "plain," and it will take all the combined skill of Mr. Morrison and Mr. Bevan to enliven it for electoral purposes with some cheerful Socialist harmonies.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

A LONDON DIARY

MR. CHURCHILL'S wild attack on Mr. Morrison and Mr. Bevan has once again increased by contrast the stature of the Prime Minister. "Mr. Attlee," people say, "may be a bit dull, but he does at least talk sense." They recall his effective reply to Mr. Churchill's Gestapo broadcast in 1945, which was, after all, no more ridiculous than the latest effort to suggest that Labour leaders are threatening or plotting a bloody revolution. Some of Mr. Churchill's colleagues have recently said with more emphasis than Mr. Morrison that the return to power of a Party pledged, as it would be under Mr. Churchill's leadership, to return to "free enterprise," (in conditions of slump a policy of low wages and unemployment), would be to ask for revolutionary strikes. That is the reason why Mr. Butler thought up the Tory Charter, which is a milk-and-water version of Labour policy, designed to cover up the naked brutality of capitalism. Bevan correctly said that if this policy won and the worker felt that the door had been closed to the Social-Democratic road, our peaceful and revolutionary tradition would be threatened; there would be danger of a violent solution to the class conflict. This is no more a threat than would be a Conservative warning that constitutional forms would be unlikely to survive if Labour's policy of nationalisation were to give way to the Communist plan of confiscating property without compensation. But then no one except a wild man would take it for a threat. The Labour Party has its wild men. It has its lunatic fringe, but it does try to keep it on the fringe and not have it at the centre.

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Harold Laski's decision not to stand against the Executive removes from it its one remaining detached and critical voice. Laski's place is rather unexpectedly taken by a rebel of a different hue. Tom Driberg is an unusually independent M.P., an "intellectual" who devotes himself to the interests of his constituency, where his popularity extends far beyond his Left-wing supporters. That he should have won so large a vote, which must have included substantial trade union backing, is interesting. His views are in many ways idiosyncratic. He is about the only man I know now who manages to cling firmly to the hope of

reconciling the Kremlin and the Vatican—or, perhaps, he doesn't really hope it. The reconciliation is his own solution to the moral dilemma of our time. Possibly he owes some of his popularity to his personal column in *Reynolds News*, which is widely read throughout the movement.

* * *

Some well-meaning, but not very politically-minded supporters of Labour may be inclined to favour acceptance of the Lords' amendment to the Steel Bill. The argument is that since steel cannot be more than formally nationalised before the general election, Labour may as well get the credit for agreeable and democratic conduct by accepting the proposal to postpone the vesting day until the electorate has pronounced its verdict. This sounds like the "decent thing." Well, having weighed this up, I find myself in favour of indecency in this matter. There are times when decency is a trap. Labour has a mandate for nationalising steel and for a Socialist there is nothing democratic in giving way to the House of Lords. Indeed the argument derives from a state of mind that instinctively fears annoying one's opponents rather than one's friends. The effect on the rank and file of accepting the Lords' amendment to postpone worries me much more than the effect on the supposedly floating middle-class voter. The Socialist enthusiast in the country will see no sort of reason to be agreeable to the Tories or make concessions to the Lords: he will simply think his leaders are running away.

* * *

I had always understood that Friday Forum was an unscripted programme until last week I heard Mr. Gammans, M.P., reading from a prepared M.S. in his debate with Woodrow Wyatt, M.P., on Communism in South-East Asia. I hope the B.B.C. will maintain the unscripted tradition; the value of these arguments lies in their directness and spontaneity. As it was, Mr. Wyatt won too easily; the listener's sympathies were at once with him when he replied to Mr. Gammans' obviously manufactured attacks. In fact Mr. Wyatt is an excellent broadcast debater, clear, fair, well-informed and good-tempered. On this occasion I had only one criticism of his performance. I believe that it is a mistake for Western publicists, on paper or on the air, to put forward their programme for aid and development in Asia only or mainly on the ground that it is the alternative to Communism. The reason for discarding imperialism and offering friendship and economic help to countries where we are now represented as tools of American big business or as capitalist exploiters on our own behalf is that most of us (Mr. Gammans, I think, is in a minority) have ceased to want to be these things. Instead, we are in process of discovering a happy and mutually advantageous relation with these peoples. If we are trying at last to be good, why talk as if we were only activated by Machiavellian motives?

* * *

Andrew Roth is an unusually outspoken, hard-working and well-informed American journalist whose articles on South-East Asia have appeared occasionally in this journal. He is a regular correspondent of the *Nation* (New York) and a contributor to such highly reputable American newspapers as the *Louisville Courier-Journal* and *St. Louis Post-Despatch*. He also writes for a large number of Asiatic papers, including, in India, the *Hindu*. He has now been refused permission to enter Japan. His letter of protest to General MacArthur is a master-piece of restrained and unanswerable argument. He is no doubt right in saying that the real reason for his exclusion is that he is "Left of Centre," and the author of a book *Dilemma in Japan*, published in 1945, which warned America of the danger of doing just what under MacArthur America has in fact done in Japan. Roth was two years an Intelligence officer in the U.S. Navy in Japan. He argued that America would only too easily find herself "linked up with the *Zaibatzu* (economic monopolists), the authoritarian bureaucracy and large landlords," who would accept the facade of democracy in order to maintain their real power just as their opposite numbers in Germany did after Versailles. His answers to various smear stories put out about himself are quite complete. In each case the law has pronounced a hundred per cent in his favour. He points out, however, that papers which make vast headlines out of the "smear" in America are with difficulty persuaded t print the proof that the smear was a lie in the smallest type in the obscurest position. He says: "In present conditions in America you are deemed guilty even after you are proved innocent." He ends his letter to MacArthur:

> One of the ways in which the world judges the U.S. is by whether our deeds are as golden as our words. When we talk about free elections (with an eye on the Balkans), there is always someone to come back with: "What about South Carolina?" When we talk about political terrorism abroad, someone will pop up with: "What about the lynching of Negroes?" I trust that when an American representative in the United Nations next gets up to attack the Iron Curtain restrictions on press freedom it will not be possible for someone to ask: "What about the 'Nylon Curtain' around Japan?"

* * *

I protest that it's quite untrue that I am the original young man in the limerick who could not tell the difference between God save the weasel and Pop goes the King. I always recognise the National Anthem, unless the band confuses me with a lot of unauthorised twiddly bits. But I admit that as a bird listener I am more enthusiastic than efficient. This year I obeyed the official instructions and went into the garden at dawn with a pencil and paper. The whole thing came off according to schedule. The first item was a solo, maintained with precision but without variety for more than a minute, by a cuckoo. I detest cuckoos. I do not go so far as one man who told me that he got up in the early hours to chase the cuckoos out of his garden, once even losing his bedroom slippers by throwing them at this mocker of married men who sat on an apple-tree branch protected by a bed of stinging nettles. But I agree with him that cuckoos are the most persistent of all bores. After the cuckoo came that pause which I find the most wonderful moment of the bird chorus. You can hear them waking up, opening their eyes and trying out their voices under their breath as it were. The music was just tuning up like this when that habitual disturber of peace, the blackbird, went off like an alarm clock and shattered the stillness. Then everyone joined in. I ought to be able to tell you and the Bird Research Station at Glanton, Northumberland, what I heard, but, as I say, my ear is not good enough for that. I heard a willow-wren, and the blackbird made up for his earlier attack of nerves by sitting on the roof of the shed and whistling and singing as if he'd burst with happiness. Soon there were twenty different birds singing together. I listened and despaired of sorting out the robin from the wren and the thrushes from the blackbirds and the warblers from each other. Despairing of sorting them out, I went back to bed. My gratitude to the Bird Research Station for getting me out of bed to hear the orchestra is not any the less because I cannot supply them with scientific material. CRITIC

LITTLE FLOWERS OF ST. STAFFORD

[Our Party has always insisted upon . . . the supremacy of moral values.—*Sir Stafford Cripps. Blackpool, June 7th.*]

St. Stafford once his Treasury cell
Forsook, so holy Brothers tell,
And preached at Blackpool several hours,
In praise of certain little flowers—
What were they? Guess!
The flowers of holiness.

St. Stafford's holy flowers are three,
The holiest is Poverty,
The others, named with reverence,
Almsgiving and Obedience.
All may possess
The flowers of holiness.

The Saint at Blackpool in these words
Adjured his listening brother birds—
"Repine not that no plum-cake comes,
Be thankful for fair shares of crumbs,
And for your dress
Wear flowers of holiness.

"Toil only to meet charges due
To holy Inland Revenue,
The root of evil which you bring
The Treasury spends in almsgiving.
World's goods are less
Than flowers of holiness.

"Suppose the wolf be at your door,
O, seek to drive it off no more!
Behold the wolf, once led inside,
Is changed to Poverty, your bride,
She you will bless
With flowers of holiness.

"With Poverty once settled in,
Then welcome Sister Discipline,
Almsgiving to St. Stafford leave,
Which from your taxes you receive—
He will assess
Your flowers of holiness."

Then chirped the birds "For Stafford's sake,
We poverty prefer to cake."
Which was, as holy Brothers tell,
St. Stafford's major miracle.
He from pecuniary distress
Raised little flowers of holiness.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed. Paste entries on a POSTCARD.

Added Mrs. ——: "When Mrs. —— told me she had been intimate with my husband I refused to give her tea."—*Daily Express*. (Carol J. Dodwell.)

Wanted, very old pram or go-car to convey old Bull Terrier dog back home from hunting.—Advt. in *St. Andrew's Citizen*. (G. C. Taylor.)

It is not going too far to say that at least half of our soccer defeats abroad would be avoided if English—or equally unbiased—referees were in charge.—*Star*. (Derek S. Pugh.)

May I, through your paper, congratulate the Chairman and the members of the Winchester Butchers' Buying Committee on their great victory over the Ministry of Food, in refusing to take the old New Zealand cow-beef for rations for their customers.

This victory is as great as the Battle of Britain to me.—Letter in Portsmouth *Evening News*. (Rev. K. Brown.)

I have spent ten minutes smashing up my records made by Communist Robeson.—Letter in *Sunday Express*. (Enid Starkie.)

Only recently I was told by a girl who has spent most of her 21 years in the process of education that the U.S.S.R. "must be the United States Southern Railway." Women are beyond the reach of education. We should ensure that education is placed beyond the reach of women.—Letter in *Picture Post*. (P. D. Scott.)

Before being sentenced at Winchester yesterday to three months' jail on a burglary charge, — pleaded not to be sent to prison.

"My old school has a very honoured name, sir," he said. "If you have to send me to prison I shall be the first old boy who has ever had such an indignity."—*Sunday Express*. (C. Van Gelderen.)

In New York . . . a schoolteacher planning a trip to Britain asked me: "What does a *British* native look like?" I could only reply that Britain had no natives.—Letter in the *Leader*. (M. Wyatt.)

ISSOUDUN

THE trains in France are excellent to-day. Past Orleans, and through the Beauce, that sea of wheatfields that stretches West to Chartres and beyond, the 6.20 p.m. takes you in three hours from the Gare d'Austerlitz right into the heart of France, beyond the Loire. Issoudun is about as nearly the geographical centre of France as you can make it. It is off the beaten track. Bourges is to the East, the Touraine to the West; the country is flat, and no one makes much money out of tourists, either French or foreign. There are only three hotels in this town of 14,000 people; and all three (with comfort that is far from modern) are near the station, the only distinction of which is a huge grain elevator. For this is the Berry, a country rich in wheat.

A few minutes' walk from the station is the market square, with a tower left over from a medieval castle on one side, and an old church, rebuilt in 1880, on the other. All round the square are shops where they sell clothes and watches and jewellery and shot-guns and fishing tackle—good fishing, good shooting all around these parts—and butchers' shops too, with huge carcases suspended from their hooks, no bother about ration cards, and as much *biftek* at 350 francs a kilo as you wish, and can afford. And I counted fully eight or nine *patisseries* in and around the market square, all with a steady flow of business throughout the week, and the usual Saturday boom, when four times more cakes and brioches and *babas-au-rhum* and *mille-feuilles* and whatnot are sold than on ordinary days. For Saturday is market day, and the farmers from the neighbourhood come in their cars—I say cars, *not* carts—to do business.

"*La foire, la foire,*" old man Lefèvre grumbled in the Café de la Gare. "It's not what it used to be before the *other* war"—meaning 1914. "Then the *foire* on Saturdays was something really worth seeing; thousands of sacks of grain were piled up in the market square, and were sold there and then; farmers would then come in their carts and their horse-carriages from far away, and they naturally stayed two nights at Issoudun, one before the *foire* and the other after it, and there were ten hotels here in those days. Now they come dashing here in their cars in the afternoon and off they go at night; the grain goes straight to the silo or the mill, and, apart from the shopping, all the big business at the *foire* in grain and straw is done on paper. You should have seen the horse fairs we used to have here, even not so long before this last war. But now it's all machines, tractors—the horse is falling on evil days in this part of the world!"

Peaceful, dreamy Issoudun! *Voyons, voyons, ici on n'a pas trop souffert.* I heard this not even reluctant admission from *le père* Lefèvre; and I heard it from dozens of others. Issoudun just missed being occupied by the Germans, and was just inside Vichy France. "Later, it is true, the Germans came, but the occupation was a light one, and, apart from commandeering for the Wehrmacht all the blankets they could lay their hands on, and shooting in the market place ten of those poor Resistance boys the day before they quitted in '44, they weren't much trouble really. And both during the war and since—let's face it—the farmers have got richer and richer and richer. *Faut voir les choses comme elles sont.* There is a lot to be said in our part of the world for the black market. For, look at the results! Our agriculture has been modernised; tractors, and more tractors—mostly American, better and cheaper than the French—have taken the place of horses. The black market—well, yes, it would have been wicked if our peasants had squandered the money on drink and women, but they modernised their equipment, improved their methods of cultivation. *En effet,* they rendered France a great service."

This is a country of large farms, up to 2,000 acres. "Wheat and barley mostly," said Lefèvre, "and during the war we also grew mustard for oil extraction, for we couldn't get our *arachide* from Africa then. Absentee landlords? No, no such thing in the Berry country. They are farmers, and don't pretend to be gentlemen. The farm labour is mostly foreign—Poles, who've been here since before the war; German prisoners now in free employment; quite a number of Spaniards, and even some Portuguese. The Spaniards, driven by hunger, keep filtering through the frontier into France; all the way from here to the Pyrenees you find Spanish farm labourers who have come here 'illegally.' The local authorities fix them up as best they can, for we are glad to have them. They are good workers." "And cheap?" I asked. "Well, no. They practically all join some agricultural trade union; these trade unions are not very powerful, but, in the main, certain standard rules now exist for wages, food and housing; there has in the last few years been a particularly notable improvement in the housing of farm labourers. The degrading business of the labourer waiting in the market place to be 'bought' by the farmer has been more or less eliminated."

They had a Communist mayor at Issoudun; but, in the opinion of the farmers and the *petit bourgeois*, he wasn't any good: all the time he was mayor, he only had one road built, and spent too much time worrying about politics. In the last *Conseil Général* election the Moderates received 1,464 votes, the Communists 1,080, and the Socialists 369. In the first round the Gaullists had some 250 votes, but nearly all these went to the Moderates in the second round. Now Issoudun has a Moderate Mayor, M. Caillaud, a lawyer in the town, "*et tout le monde est content.*"

Still, I wondered, where did all those Communist votes come from, both in the *Conseil Général*, and, more recently still, in the municipal election?

Well, there were the farm labourers—the French ones, of course, with a vote—and then there were the railwaymen, and the small employees, and, above all, the industrial proletariat of Issoudun. For, in the narrow, smelly back-streets of Issoudun, stinking of drains and tanneries, there are numerous little factories where they make leather goods—handbags and pocketbooks, and other bits of *maroquinerie*. About half of these little factories sprang up as part of the black market boom, and are now closing down; even in the more firmly established concerns they are working short hours, and there is unemployment. And wages are low—some skilled workers making only 10,000 francs a month. Since the war, a very modern shirt-making factory has also been set up—conveyer belt and all. Here, too, wages are low and the market is showing signs of shrinking. And, of course, America doesn't want to import shirts and pocket-books from Issoudun. In short, the have-nots vote and will continue to vote Communist in France. Instinctively, they prefer their vague conception of Russia to their equally vague conception of America. In the main, however, this part of France is Moderate Centre: "*Centre-Gauche, Radical-Socialiste, quoi—nous ne sommes pas des réactionnaires, voyons!* We have hardly any de Gaullists round here; *non, monsieur!*"

The outside world is distant: America and Russia are both equally remote to most of them. They remember 1940, with its thousands and thousands of cars fleeing through these parts from Paris. "*C'etait la pagaie!* A mess. Apart from a few batallions here and there, the army was non-existent. The British had deserted us at Dunkirk. We were sure England would be invaded in September. There was nothing else Pétain could do. The old man was really quite right." And one day I heard a school-teacher, a youngish man, remark: "Life must go on. You can't have forty million people in the *maquis!*" And he added: "We saved all that could have been saved from the debacle of 1940. We live, we eat, we are not too unhappy; we go to christenings, and weddings, and funerals, and twice a week we go to see American films. *C'est brutal, l'Amérique, c'est pas comme nous*; still, one passes an evening looking at the stuff. My father was wounded in the first world war, and, before that, he fought with Lyautey in Morocco. We were all frightfully proud of him when we were kids. That sort of thing doesn't amuse us any longer . . ."

And then he said: "Pacifism—what is it? The height of folly, or the depth of wisdom? You might well ask: 'Are we French going to fight in all seriousness in the next war?' I can't tell you; it depends on so many things. The real tragedy is that it is not for us French to decide whether or not there is going to be another war. We have no say in the matter. And that is perhaps why we are more profoundly anti-war than we have been in all our history. We are not degenerate. We work very hard. In the last war we did what others did before us: we let the others do the fighting. Didn't others make *us* do most of the fighting in 1914-18?"

The French in these parts have a lot of children, and when they talk about their children they often say that they must work hard, and study well, but never mind about the glory of Verdun. A typical Communist leaflet stuck on all sorts of walls at Issoudun says: "The war in Vietnam costs us 300 millions per day. With that money we could build 200 four-room houses at Issoudun." The present Government will not pull out of Vietnam, any more than we will pull out of Malaya. But the overseas territories to which the French are really attached are in Africa. So the war in Indo-China is profoundly distasteful to everybody. Only it is so far away that one doesn't think very much about it. Instead, "We were very worried about the drought, Monsieur, but it has been raining for two days now in the Indre and the Cher and the Nièvre; *il sera beau le blé!* Nearly as fine as last year . . ."

ALEXANDER WERTH

Issoudun, Indre, May.

HUMANISM AND THE UNIVERSITIES

SOMETHING, it is obvious, is radically wrong with the Universities. While the Universities were never so popular, while the number of students and staff are doubling—Oxford, for example, in my day contained three thousand undergraduates, and is now infested by nearly eight thousand—and while discussion of aims, purposes and functions was never so frequent or so prolonged, there is, nevertheless a general sense of insufficiency.

The older Universities, which were founded in one world and grew up in another, have now to adapt themselves to a third—a world that makes demands upon them which they are neither able nor fitted to meet. The new Universities meet the demand, but nobody can or does pretend to be satisfied with the results of their so doing. Hence the title of Sir Walter Moberly's recent book, *The Crisis in the University*. It is a crisis which arises from "the contrast between the need of the time and present academic inhibitions and disabilities." Not the least disturbing aspect of the crisis is, he intimates, that most University teachers seem unaware of it.

It is the burden of Sir Walter's book that the Universities are presented by the times with a challenge. We live, it is a commonplace, in an age of intellectual confusion. Young men stand desperately in need of guidance and leadership; they want principles to live by and purposes to live for. Instead of meeting this need, the Universities are content to reflect the confusion. They have no clear conception of the kind of purposes which they should be seeking to fulfil and no agreed standards by which to measure the worth of the teaching they give. Worse, they deprecate discussion of aims and purposes and, in the interests of a disastrous ideal of neutrality, shirk their responsibilities for giving guidance under the pretext of steering clear of controversy. While reflecting our community's indifference to ends, they share its preoccupation with means. "You want an atom bomb? Right! We will make it for you. But we really can't concern ourselves with the use to which you propose to put it." Or, "You want a cathedral? Right! The architectural department will tell you how to build it. But whether you should worship in it or keep pigs in it is a question which falls outside our province." This attitude, as Sir Walter very properly points out in his book, is the abdication of the educator.

And the result? The answer can best be put in the words of the late Professor Collingwood, who was old fashioned enough to maintain that the Universities should be the leaders and not the lackeys of their civilisation:

> Since one must not seek it from thinkers or from ideals or from principles, one must look (for guidance) to people who were not thinkers (but fools), to processes that were not thinking (but passion), to aims that were not ideals (but caprices), and to rules that were not principles (but rules of expediency).

The charge, then, is that the minds of young men are left the sport of every random intellectual gust and fashion by Universities which, in Sir Walter's words, "cannot give an effective lead because they themselves share and have shown small signs of transcending the spiritual confusion of the age."

This failure to lead would have been of relative unimportance while the deposit of Christian practice, laid down by centuries of Christian belief, had still to be worked through, but today little of it is left and a generation which has jettisoned the conception of Divine purpose is increasingly abandoning the disciplines and restraints for which the conception provided a foundation of meaning and justification.

Sir Walter distinguishes three views of the function of a University. First, the Christian-Hellenic. The purpose of a University education is to enable a man to develop his personality, to realise all that he has it in him to be and so to achieve full humanity. Learning should be pursued not only for its own sake because it is a good in itself, but because learning develops the personality. There is a moment in the lives of young men when the soul is open as never before, as never again, to the influence of what is true, beautiful and good—as Lowes Dickinson put it, "an unspoilt youth of twenty with his mind just waking up and his feelings all fresh and open to good is the most beautiful thing this world produces"—and it is of this moment that a University should take advantage. There is also a practical effect. Give a man an acquaintance with the masterpieces of human thought and literature, and his efficiency as an individual will be increased. He will be endowed with a perspective and a sense of values which will tend in practice to express themselves in sound judgment. Education framed on these lines is founded on the classics; it is general and not specialised, while the College is conceived as a large family, the young being under instruction and the dons standing to them in the relation of parents as well as friends.

Secondly, there is the liberal-humanist conception. Instruction gives way to investigation; the purpose of the University has now become scholarship and research. Freedom is the most highly prized of goods, while the professor disclaims parental responsibility for his students and confines himself to objective responsibility for his subject.

Thirdly, there is the technological-democratic notion. The University now is frankly utilitarian. Its purpose, to quote a phrase of Macaulay's, is "not to make men perfect but to make imperfect human beings comfortable." It seeks to enable a man to acquire a living rather than to acquire a life worth living. Success in examination becomes of paramount importance and the university ceases to be gay, carefree and leisured. At the same time the doors of what has hitherto been an aristocratic preserve are thrown open; assisted by the State, the multitude flocks in. This is in accordance with the spirit of the times. If the Universities have goods to bestow, why, it is asked, should they be reserved for a privileged few? The question whether the goods may not be of unlimited diffusion, whether, in fact, if too many enjoy them, they may not lose their virtue, is sedulously left unasked.

It is, in fact, clear that some loss of virtue has taken place. The democratic-technological University turns out researchers and specialists, but it no longer produces what Sir Walter calls "round men." Too often, its products cannot communicate with one another intellectually and do not know one another socially. The sense of corporate consciousness is lost and men go into the world lacking, in Professor Woodward's phrase, that "minimum of general understanding which differentiates education from technical skill." Above all, they lack a philosophy of life. Sir Walter traces the development of the Universities from the first, through the second to the third of these conceptions. It is impossible, I submit, not to regard the third with disquietude and to ask oneself the question, how its shortcomings can be alleviated?

Broadly, there are two reasons for these shortcomings—the first, specialisation; the second, the intellectual and spiritual confusion of our time. That the Universities should remedy the second of these is too much to expect. Writing from an avowedly Christian standpoint, Sir Walter looks inevitably to Christianity to fill the contemporary spiritual vacuum. Christian teachers should, he thinks, seek to permeate the atmosphere of a University playing "the rôle of a 'creative minority,' from which the whole community may gradually take colour; as, for example, the Utilitarians in one generation and the Fabians in another permeated British public life." This, I fancy, is a Utopian hope. I see no reason why Christian belief should make more headway in a University than it does in the world outside. In the question "Does God exist?" most students, as Sir Walter himself concedes, are simply not interested, and if they are not interested in God, how much less are they interested in Christianity?

My own view is that the most practicable course available at the moment is a return to the conception of classical-humanism. I do not mean that all University men should take Classics, but I contend that a compulsory course in the history of philosophy permeated, as Western philosophy is, by the thought and culture of Greece, would do something not only to correct the over-specialisation of the Universities, but to provide, if not a philosophy of life, at least the materials from which such a philosophy might be formed. After all, it has done so in the past. Why, then, should it be supposed that the thought of Greece and Rome, and more particularly of Greece, should have lost its appeal or should fail of its effect in the present? I would suggest that every student, whatever other subject he may be studying, should take, as he does in most Scottish Universities, a compulsory course in the history and problems of philosophy, supplemented by the history of scientific ideas.

Three things of value might, I submit, be looked for from such a course. First, it would give the power of concentrated thought. This has a special relevance at the present time, when an increasing number of men are subjected to conditions which render the practice of concentrated thought impossible. I have been told, for example, by young men who have just completed their military service that the utter intellectual deadness of army life, its trivial and disconnected tasks, its waste of time and its sense of frustration play such havoc with the mind that for months afterwards they have found it impossible to concentrate on anything. Secondly, it would have the effect, historically claimed for it, of turning out "round men," that is to say, men with a perspective and a sense of the relative values of things. It would so polish and refine their minds that they could "get up" any subject of which they might subsequently stand in need, while the possession of a perspective and a sense of relative values would fit them for high administrative posts by enabling them to give sensible orders to those who knew more about the details of the work to be done than they did themselves. Finally, though this is too large a matter to receive more than a mention here, such a course has been known to give men a serenity of outlook. It may not in our present age be the best dividend-payer from the purely utilitarian standpoint, but this at least may be said of it, that it sometimes enables men to despise the wealth that it prevents them from acquiring.

C. E. M. JOAD

AN OPEN LETTER TO MAO TSE-TUNG

My Dear Mao,

While we in Shanghai were waiting for you in our enforced idleness there was much time for reflection. I am a young foreigner, and have been in China for a comparatively short time. I am here as a merchant, and my aim is to make money. But for the money made I also want to give good service, as any self-respecting merchant should. In business we get to know a certain layer of the people in whose land we live, which is why what I am going to say now may be too prejudiced by my personal acquaintance with certain Chinese types.

You see, I first met China through the pages of Arthur Waley's translations of some of your great poets, and since that first introduction I have been trying to read as much of China's philosophy and history as I can, so that I have a slight knowledge of, and deep respect for, the people who live in China. I have been very fortunate in that I have some Chinese friends who have always been willing to teach me about China, and whose friendship is a very real privilege which I am proud to have. But off and on I keep thinking back to the first real, big impression I had of China when I arrived here just after the Japanese war was over, and was met by the Customs officials at Lunghwa. From then on I have been thoroughly tempted at times to sum up the whole Chinese character in one word: "Squeeze." And reading back China's history more carefully, with personal experience in mind, it seems that the dishonesty of public officials and the exploitation of the coolie is as old as China's history itself.

Now they say that there is a new wind blowing through China. They say that, in your 20 years' struggle, you have managed to impart discipline and loyalty into your followers. They say that your officials are honest, that your army will not plunder and your Customs officers will not accept bribes. But in 1926 they said that about Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang, and that is why I am writing this letter to you.

There is no doubt that the Kuomintang Government is the most corrupt government of modern days, but there is equally no doubt that the Kuomintang started out with great ideals, and for a certain time enforced them. It is easy to say it was solely the fault of leadership; that, when Chiang Kai-shek sold out the Communists in Shanghai in 1927, he sold his soul; and that everything else followed logically out of his treachery. I believe that it goes deeper than this, that it is the petty official, the small Customs man, the junior policeman, who is as much to blame for what happened in nationalist China as T. V. Soong and H. H. Kung. And whether you like it or not, you will have to use the same people, the same Customs men who, as soon as a ship comes into harbour, spread themselves in the ship's dining room, eat the best food, and drink the best whisky, the same Customs men who squeeze the steerage passengers, the poorest of the poor, the same Customs men who can be seen any day in Shanghai carrying bottles of champagne and boxes of cigars off liners.

Then you will have to use the same fire brigade which, not a week ago, when one of the hut encampments was afire, spent two hours bargaining for 10 gold bars before they consented to put the fire out, while in the meantime 20,000 people were made homeless. You will have to use the same soldiers, soldiers who have no regard for private property, who will take the peasants' stored rice which represents their whole wealth, who will sell a house they have occupied but which does not belong to them, and who will also sell their battles. You will have to use the same bank clerks and the same civil servants who sit in the export-import board and sell their licences to the highest bidder.

These people have excuses. They are not scoundrels as we in the West understand them. They have their own loyalty, the loyalty to their family. They are good friends once you get to know them. They are under-paid, and they have the bad example of their leaders in front of them. But, and this is the important point, they do not know that they are doing wrong. They do not realise that they are harming their own country, and you, Mao, will have to work with them, will have to educate them and use them. That old saw of Lord Acton's, "power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely," goes double in China. From the time of the first four demon Ministers of the legendary emperor down to our own day, bribery and corruption have been the accepted standards of Chinese government.

As I write this, a snapshot of you taken full face lies in front of me. On it you have written in your own rather beautiful—although I am no judge—elongated handwriting the date on which the photo was taken, and "In the service of the people." I believe that this inscription is a sincere expression of your intention, and I hope, nay, I want with all my heart your policies to succeed. In one year in Shanghai I have seen enough to break the hearts of a thousand men. You get hardened to it, and because our elders, who have been here for 30 years and more, shrug their shoulders and say, "What can you do with people like that?" we, too soon, adopt the resignation of defeat. What you are taking on is the most heartbreaking, the most thankless, job in history, and, having read China's history, I am so very afraid that China will swallow you just as she swallowed other good and strong men who wanted nothing else but to help the Chinese people into some form of decent life.

Of course, you know everything I have said yourself, but in the moment of victory after over 20 years of war, the temptation of rest must be very strong, and the temptation of power even stronger. To the outside world it looks as if you have reached your goal, but in reality you have not even started to fight yet.

The other day I spoke to a missionary doctor, a man who has been in the interior of China since 1904, and who, in doctoring, has forgotten his religion. He said: "The Chinese mind is like the sea, it seems pliable and full of movement, but in reality it does not change." Then he corrected himself: "That is too much of a generalisation, but in China an idea takes at least 200 years to have any effect on the life of the people." That may not be true, but to teach loyalty and discipline and a new concept of life to any people takes more than a generation. You are a patient and steadfast man. No one who has not these qualities would have gone on the Long March. But will you be patient and steadfast enough not to be corrupted by your own people?

I trust that you will not take this letter amiss. It is written because of a very genuine fear within myself, a fear that in 20 years China will still be as it is now. As you would not know my name, I subscribe myself—

Yours sincerely,

A Young Foreigner

Shanghai, May, 1949.

SO THEY SAY . . .

The press have made patriotic and well-intentioned endeavours to assure their readers that there are no "Snake Pits" in Britain.

News Chronicle, May 27 :—

Today was "at home" day at Rubery Hill Mental Hospital . . . the wards were thrown open to the press, who could go where they liked . . . Rubery Hill can certainly dispose of the "Snake Pit" impression of hard-faced gaoler-nurses . . . From the matron to the newest probationer . . . they are women . . . with a real vocation . . . This is a hopeful place, not only in terms of the number of patients discharged, but of the attitude.

Next day, however, there was a sadly different story to tell of a coroner's inquest.

Daily Express, May 28 :—

NO NURSE IN WARD FOR 80 : "ASYLUM STAFF DO AS THEY LIKE"

While a group of reporters was being escorted round Birmingham's Rubery Hill mental hospital . . . a woman inmate was lying dead after a fight between patients . . . [which] took place when no night nurse was on duty . . . [She] had been sick and did not turn up . . . The medical officer of the hospital said . . . that nurses sometimes failed to turn up, but they were not sacked because it would be difficult to get anyone else . . . Coroner : "The staff can do as they like, then ?" "Yes."

The *News Chronicle* reported the inquest with discreet brevity.

From Our Very Special Correspondent

The Times, May 27 :—

The Civil Servants Clerical Association [carried] a motion in . . . endorsement of [the National Executive's] decision to take action . . . to eradicate Communist activity.

Daily Worker, May 27 :—

The Civil Servants Clerical Association refused to be drawn into the witch-hunt [and] carried a resolution endorsing the decision of the National Executive Committee to take no action . . . to exclude Communists.

The Fickleness of Fashion

Evening News, May 27 :—

Fashion Fortnight . . . has been a tremendous two weeks in which British fashions and fabrics have been sold out to a world which looks to this country for clothes. . .

Evening Standard, May 27 :—

FASHION FORTNIGHT FLOPS

Little business has been done . . . orders are negligible . . . the export market for British made-up fashion goods now hardly exists . . .

Department of Lyrical Abandon

On June 1 the Royal Scot was drawn for the first time by twin diesel-electric locomotives,

Daily Mail, June 2 :—

An excited but forgetful elderly train-spotter ran out into his back garden with only his shirt on as the train flashed through Rugby. The twins each weigh 127 tons 13 cwts, and have been unofficially christened Gilda and Rita . . .

News Chronicle, June 2 :—

An official note enthused : "It has a peculiar quality of restfulness and the rhythmic pace of many of the greatest musical themes."

La Comedie Anglaise

News Chronicle, June 1 :—

Princess Margaret typified British humour in a Paris cabaret last night . . . The band was playing "You Are Mean To Me." Turning to her friends, she said with a smile : "There's a tune that is dedicated to some photographers."

Autolycus

TURKISH BALANCE SHEET—II

[In the previous article, the author, who was *New York Times'* correspondent in Turkey from March, 1946, to May, 1949, examined the meagre results achieved in the Turkish military field by the application of the American Aid Agreement.]

THE Ankara regime offers striking similarities to that in Athens, and to the moribund Kuomintang. The men voted into power by the "free," police-managed elections of July, 1946, are corrupt, inefficient and unpopular. President Inönu, who found it expedient to drive in an escorted, bullet-proof car through the back streets from Parliament to his residence after the elections, rules Turkey through the Milli Emniyet (Turkish counterpart of M.I.5), a ruthless police and gendarmerie, and those Army cadres on whose loyalty he can rely. From his beginnings as a simple Ottoman officer of modest fortune, he has risen to a great position fortified by substantial personal wealth—much of which, following the example of Mr. T. V. Soong, he has banked in the security of the United States. As leader of the dominant Republican Peoples Party, to which the so-called Democratic Party furnishes—for the benefit of Mr. Truman and other advocates of Western institutions—an amenable official Parliamentary Opposition, he has proclaimed himself "National Chief." No Sultan excelled him in mastery of the art of government by terror and intrigue.

It was on Inönu's orders that, since 1946, Turkey's "new democracy" has been enlivened by a series of "spontaneous" demonstrations of "patriotic" students, during the course of which books were burned, the plants of liberal newspapers smashed and the Rector of Ankara University, a man with no party allegiance, nearly lynched. Inönu's outstanding achievement, however, was the "purge" in December, 1946, when five Opposition newspapers, two Socialist parties and scores of small trade unions were suppressed. Mass arrests took place of trade unionists, many of whom are still in gaol. In this policy of suppression, Inönu has had the whole-hearted co-operation of a Cabinet consisting predominantly of "Anatolianists"—members of feudal land-owning families, educated for the most part in Hitler-period Germany, all rabidly opposed to the Soviet Union, Communism and trade unionism alike. Indeed, R. S. Sirer, the Minister of Labour, who controls rigidly the officially sanctioned "syndicates" of Turkish workers, notoriously regards trade unionism and Communism as synonymous. Only Sadak, the Foreign Minister, who in England or France might have become a Right-wing Socialist, has any claim to be acquitted of the charge of being an extreme reactionary.

Under this administration, whose support has been justified by President Truman on the grounds that U.S. aid is making it possible for Turkey to "reinforce democratic institutions," Turkey is heading for an economic crisis for which Barlas, Minister for Economy and Trade, admitted last month that he could find no solution. In this year's Budget, totalling £125 million (sterling), over £50 millions were required for the pay of State employees, nearly £30 millions were absorbed in military expenditure, and over £12 millions were required to meet the service of a national debt which now stands at over £180 millions—a considerable figure for an impoverished country. Whereas the annual cost of Internal Security—Ministry of the Interior, gendarmerie and police forces—is about £9 millions, considerably less than £4 millions is allocated for the development of agriculture, and little more than £5 millions for national health and social services. Yet deaths from tuberculosis are reckoned at 100,000 a year, and the annual rate of infantile mortality is close on 400,000—as a result largely of bad housing and malnutrition.

Since 1939, the cost of living has increased by 600 per cent., and is now soaring at the rate of 20 per cent. monthly. Meanwhile, the foreign trade balance shows a serious deficit, and Turkey's reserves of gold and foreign currencies are rapidly vanishing. Hopes that the Budget could be relieved and production increased by demobilisation have not materialised. The prediction by General McBride, head of the U.S. Army Group, that, given greater efficiency and modern equipment, the size of Turkey's army could be reduced, has been falsified by events. Moreover, even if there were a partial demobilisation, the troops released would, in the present condition of Turkish economy, find little in the way of productive occupation.

A façade of "success" is being maintained. While the Anatolian peasant finds it hard to keep the wolf from the door of his wretched mud hut, the Ankara Government spends dollars lavishly in the purchase of large American cars for official use; and immense sums are being spent on the erection, in Ankara, of a super-modern building for Parliament, whose members, in a recent debate on the need for "economies," voted themselves an increase in the salaries of Deputies. Beneath the surface, however, there is a growing undercurrent of popular unrest and dissatisfaction. Outside earshot of the Milli Emniyet, it is increasingly being said that abandonment of neutrality was an act of folly for Turkey, and that the Truman Doctrine and U.S. Aid are merely riveting on the Turkish people the shackles of misery. In the hope, which has proved abortive, that inclusion of Turkey in the Atlantic Pact could be presented as a feather in the Government's diplomatic cap, the Foreign Minister was recently sent to Washington to urge this course on the State Department. His errand was fruitless, either because the State Department wished to "stall" until after the Paris Conference, or because Britain, whose Foreign Secretary is said to be reluctant to share with Mr. Acheson the leading role in a Mediterranean Pact, put a spoke in the wheel. In any case, popular unrest in Turkey would not be allayed by news of wider commitments or closer ties with the West.

What the common poeple of Turkey want today is to see an end to the present suppression of all civil liberties, the police terror in the towns, and the brutal treatment of protesting peasants in remote Anatolian villages. What they are likely to see is not the "reinforcement of democratic institutions," or the attainment of "economic stability," which Mr. Truman promised them, but the sale of national resources by a politically and morally bankrupt Government to American finance capital. Publication of the Marshall Aid bilateral agreement was suppressed in Turkish newspapers by order of the Cabinet, who have issued repeated official assurances that "no oil concessions in Turkey will be granted to foreigners." Recent drilling by the American Drilesco Company has disclosed that the Ramandagi oil-field in South-Eastern Turkey is very rich. Mr. W. Faust, a high executive of the Socony Vacuum Oil Corporation, was in Turkey during April, carrying on with the Government negotiations of whose nature the Turkish people are unaware. The indications are that the Government is pinning its last hopes on dollar royalties from this oil. From recent history in Iran and Iraq the Turkish people may gather what sort of "stability" Socony Vacuum, if it became concessionaire, would require in return. But then, popularity in Turkey is perhaps not America's primary object. Strategic plans and oil concessions may count for more than such an unimportant thing as friendship.

ASLAN HUMBARACI

REALISM

NOT so long ago—it was in 1948—they were shooting a film in the Tyrol, a historical picture set in the Third Reich. For some minor parts a number of S.S. were required. Since genuine storm-troopers are no longer about, and since genuine actors were scarce, the director, parading the young manhood of the village, picked eight suitable types and had them fitted by the studio tailor with brand new black S.S. uniforms.

The director was very pleased with the men's work. It is not for nothing, he thought, that the sturdy Tyrolese mountaineers are reputed to have a traditional urge and gift for play-acting.

During a break—may be, there were too many clouds, or not enough—the eight amateur actors, still in their costumes, proceeded towards the village inn. Tyrolese wine is a good thing; so is the pay-packet in a film studio. The eight saw certain possibilities; the mere thought of that wine in prospect made them feel gay and jocular.

On the road, they were overtaken by the big bus which, once a day, connects these remote parts with the great world beyond the mountains. The eight villagers in S.S. uniform stopped the bus. One of them opened the door and shouted: "Get out, all of you!" Another one, as the frightened passengers clambered out, said: "Here we are again," implying that the S.S. and the Third Reich had come down (or up) to earth again.

As they saw the victims of their prank tremble with fear, the eight men, warming to their impromptu task, ordered the passengers about, shouted rude questions, demanded and examined passports. While they were thus engaged in showing their histrionic talents their director happened to come along, saw the mischief, called his Film-S.S. to order, sent them packing to the inn (which they were bent for anyway), and offered his profuse apologies to the frightened passengers.

Inside the bus, was an elderly ailing gentleman, so frightened that he had not been able to get out. It so happened he used to live in that neighbourhood at the time of the regime, and having been in opposition he had been dealt with, once or twice, by the local S.S. Now, four or five years later, he was sitting in that bus, deathly pale, unable to move, frightened out of his wits.

"My dear sir," said the film director with all the charm he could command, "I beg you not to take this so seriously. We're merely shooting a picture, a historical film, don't you know. This little incident has nothing to do with the film, nor, of course, with real life. It was just a boyish prank—exuberance of youth and all that, don't you know. Boys will be boys. They are really quite harmless local peasants and shepherds. One or two of them are ski-trainers for tourists."

The grey old gentlemen shook his head with an agonised whisper: "I have had some experience of the S.S. in these parts. You have picked your types very well, sir. They are—*the same men!*"

ERICH KASTNER

CHINESE WINTER SCENE

Crossing the frozen lake
She remembers how once the water reflected his face beside her own,
But because she is old and no longer beautiful
No one troubles to ask why her tears are falling.

SU SAN

LETTERS FROM TWO ISLANDS

Isle of Wight

. . . I have been spending some time lately with a two-year-old. Living in the country, this child sees cows, pigs, sheep, horses as well as tractors and cars. But he is far more interested in the tractors and cars than he is in the animals. Why? I suspect he was born with this particular interest. The new fairy Meccano was foremost at his christening. The fascination of machinery was here waiting for him. He saw the world at once through the eyes of the later Nineteen-Forties. Oil and all that could be done with it were in the very air he breathed. He looked at once for wheels going round. He knew himself to be born into an engineer's world. But how? There is a mystery here.

And what a wasteful and expensive world it is, this of gadgets. Consider, my learned friend, the problem of razors. As I write this I can hear a buzzing from a neighbouring bedroom, and I realise that one of our young guests is shaving himself with a small electrical machine, and may at any moment blow a fuse. For at least forty years my father used one razor, an old German hollow-ground razor, and I never saw him looking badly shaven. During the last thirty-five years or so I must have bought and used twenty different safety razors and hundreds and hundreds of blades; and I doubt if I ever look quite as clean as my father did. The young men who come courting and marrying my daughters bring with them electric shavers, can be heard muttering enquiries about voltages, and any time now will probably have to lug transformers up to their bedrooms. And their chins look worse than mine does, and cannot compare with my father's, which knew only one razor that cost a few shillings. If there is any progress here, except in expensive gadgetry, it has escaped my observation.

Could you please send me *The Two Worlds of Marcel Proust* by Harold March? Like many such critical works from across the Atlantic, it has gone immediately out of print (sometimes I think they publish only review copies), and I cannot find a copy. Proust fascinates me as a man just as he delights me as a novelist. I have read him from end to end several times—in English, for I find the French too difficult—and I still frequently dip into him, taking a walk in his world. What about you? If you have left him alone during the last few years, go back to him, preferably when you have plenty of time, and I will bet you a good dinner (if we can find one) that you will enjoy him more than ever. His faults are obvious. Often when his insight fails him, he still goes on and on, and then is long-winded, portentous and tedious. (For all his genius, he needed a good editor at his elbow.) He never understood the normal relations between men and women, and misses the tenderness, the fun, the cosy affection. His world is far too feminine and social, and would be better for a few offices, factories, clubs and cattle markets. This is not a superficial objection but really cuts deep, for he largely concentrated upon a feminine world without having a true feminine outlook and sense of responsibility. On the other hand, the masculine world of work and business and play, with its restfully neutral personal relationships, offered him no refreshment. And it is this, not the notorious social snobbery, which was just a game he played, that gives his work a rather stifling hothouse atmosphere. In his novel, great as it is, he often seems still the astonishingly precocious boy who stayed up far too late, amusing everybody, at fashionable parties. Although in some matters he has the insight and wisdom of a thousand-year-old sage, his idea of love does not seem to me adult at all but adolescent, made up of curiosity, frustration, imaginative hunger, and all that belongs to personality in bud; a love you cannot do anything with, like that of a schoolboy for a famous actress. (And the books in which the narrator still *is* an adolescent, the middle books, are to my mind the most successful.) Not as an appearance, when she is marvellously handled, but as a person, Albertine must be the most notable failure in all great fiction. And we all know about the fantastic chronology, the shocking loose ends and contradictions.

Far too much fuss was made about Proust, just after his death, as a psychologist, a social historian, a metaphysician of Time; and so, when critical readers discovered he had been over-praised in these capacities, they made the mistake of concluding that he was much less important as a novelist than they had once imagined. And here, in my not so humble opinion, they went badly wrong. As a novelist, the creator of a world of his own, Proust is one of the truly great figures of our time. I will go further and declare he is the greatest novelist of this century. Nor will I leave it at that, but will also declare that his stupendous narrative, so massive and yet so delicate, keeping in motion a whole host of characters and yet also recording the most subtle shades of thought and feeling, is one of the major achievements of the modern kind. And—for let us stand up for Literature for once—unlike the triumphs of the scientists and the engineers of our time, it was the achievement of one man, working unaided in solitude. I am myself about as far removed from Proust as the West Riding is from the Faubourg St. Germain; but down the years not only has my admiration for his work not diminished but I have come to feel the profoundest respect and much affection for this French genius. What tenacity he had, this white-faced perfumed dandy! Hysterical mountebanks like Hitler and Mussolini bellow about their Will, but here, glassy-eyed in his fumigated cork-lined room, his dying hand still making notes, was the real man of will; with a resolution that rose to nobility; and more purity and tenderness of heart than all the prigs and fanatics who now condemn him. There! And now will you please send me that book about him?

A man digging a ditch, within sight of my study window here, found a thick old coin, which has now been identified as a sestertius struck by Domitian. This is by no means early history for these parts. There is in fact a megalithic monument, the Long Stone, just outside our garden here. But what interests me at the moment is my own attitude of mind towards such evidence of historical continuity. Even ten years ago I would have been either indifferent to or rather irritated by such a discovery. I took the view that we had too much history on our backs here, that the sense of the past almost thickened and darkened the air; and in all sincerity I welcomed the absence of all this in America, declaring that I felt lighter, more at ease, in Western regions whose history was just beginning. But now I have changed, though I do not know whether the change has come through some shift in the imagination or through the chemistry of my blood—or through both together. But it has happened. Now I like to think of that farmworker staring at the Roman Emperor's coin, of all that long procession along the time track; and what once seemed to me merely to thicken and darken the air now seems to be a nourishing rootedness, calming the heart and widening and strengthening the mind. We have been here a long long time. It may be we have values as yet unperceived by all those new men of power conjuring airplane factories and hostels out of their vast unhistorical plains.

We are having an Elgar Festival, and I wish I was not too busy to attend it. Like most of your neighbours, I think, you have never really discovered Elgar. There are people here who dismiss him as "Edwardian," which seems to me about as sensible as calling Brahms a Victorian. Some musicians are oddly prejudiced against him. I remember once discussing him with a famous Central European conductor, who said there were fine things in Elgar but that he could not be given high rank because he did not concentrate his music sufficiently and properly, because he was too scattered and diffuse. As I knew this conductor had a passion for Brückner and Mahler, I concluded that prejudice was at work in his mind. In music, as in the other arts, there is a good deal of stupid negative criticism about now. Thus it is pointed out to us that Elgar is often lush and often vulgar. So he is. And so was Shakespeare. And there are lots of composers who are never lush, never vulgar, and also never worth listening to. But I will admit that there is something peculiarly English about Elgar—a quality that might have been distilled from the green dusk of these long June evenings—that moves me profoundly in a way that I do not expect the foreign listener to appreciate. That first low thrilling entry of the solo instrument in his Violin Concerto; the heart-broken reminiscences in the last movement of the 'Cello Concerto; the faint gold and ghostly Maytime of Falstaff's dream in that wonderful tone-poem: these things have haunted me ever since I first began listening to music. I must send you the recording of the *Falstaff*, which Elgar himself, looking like a retired Indian Army colonel at a race-meeting, once told me was the best recording of any of his music; although this was long before Casals, playing like an angel, recorded the 'Cello Concerto.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

From "The New Statesman" of June, 1924

Plus Ça Change

The Tube strike . . . is a very unfortunate and confused affair. There is, first of all, an unofficial strike by a group of men . . . who are members of the National Union of Railwaymen. Then there is an official strike of shopmen . . . and beyond these there is the threat of the locomotive engineers to declare a national strike unless the anomalies arising out of their recent agreement are corrected. Unofficial strikes in public utility services are not to be tolerated.

War and Truth

A war-time lie is merely a dramatisation of a people's hope or its hatred, and whether hatred is of much use as an aid to winning a war is a matter on which history speaks with an uncertain voice from the days of Hannibal to those of Lissauer.

Sweet are the Uses

There is an increasing tendency in this country for undertakings and industries which feel they are liable to attack to advertise a series of announcements in their defence . . . One concludes from these announcements that, instead of being in business for profits—which as a matter of fact are infinitesimal—the advertisers are really philanthropists in disguise who have been most inadequately rewarded by the honours already conferred upon them.

Dethronement

Listening to the greater part of *Fidelio* we cannot help feeling that Beethoven had no musical genius at all, the music is so conventional, so uninspired, so obvious. Yet it cost him immense labour.

The Arts and Entertainment

THE MOVIES

"They Live by Night" and "The Window," at the Academy.

Lady Violet Bonham Carter talked delightfully (*école de* MacCarthy) over the air the other night about some of the bad books she had enjoyed. Her favourites had been *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, the novels of Ouida and the poems of Ella Wheeler Wilcox: more pleasurable, she concluded, the bad good book than the good bad book. This mood, which involves being amused by, as well as at, what one enjoys, is one that has provided me with many consolatory hours in the cinema. There was a good badness about *Ben Hur* and *King Kong*, and a bad badness about the later escapades of Tarzan; Hollywood indeed exerts itself at times enormously in the cultivation of the good-bad. At this moment in the West End Miss Paulette Goddard is disporting herself as a Borgia, while in *Joan of Arc* the lady, Technicolored, is very much for burning; though in the latter case there are rather too many tedious preliminaries for our equivocal enjoyment. As for the film good without qualification, it has been narrowed down by Hollywood to one particular kind of film whose characteristics by now we all know. It will deal with crime, its hero will be the victim or rebel of circumstance, the mood will be disillusioned, civilisation will be seen as ugly, there will be a grey beautifully observed background, document will be matched with tension, the photography (very much in the line of Walker Evans) will be irreproachable, and (possibly) a flicker of sentimentality will enter the last few seconds. To complete the picture, this kind of film employs talent, is chary of stars, costs comparatively little to make, and when shown in this country goes straight to the circuits or to a place as second feature, without perhaps, even a press-show. Recent examples: *The Street With No Name*, *The Window*, *Act of Violence*, and *Force of Evil*. The same round-the-corner distribution—no big budget, no big show—would have been accorded to *They Live by Night* if it had not been enterprisingly picked up by the Academy cinema together with *The Window*.

Of the two *They Live by Night* is the more striking. It adheres to the general qualities listed above, and has particular merits of its own. The frame-work, the story, the excitements are traditional. Three men break out of jail, take refuge in a broken down filling-station, and carry out a daring succession of bank robberies; the third of this trio, a mere youngster, would like to escape from crime but cannot, falls in love with a girl as cut off from happiness as himself, marries her, and they spend their honeymoon hiding from the police by day and driving towards New Mexico at night. In the end he is cornered by the police and shot. What is remarkable about this film is not merely authenticity of background (we have had that before) and some perfect acting by little-known performers, but an unexpected poetry and satire that give a fresh edge to this type of story. Most gangster films make their impact with no comment: here the hopeless love idyll of the boy and girl, most touchingly portrayed by Farley Granger and Cathy O'Donnell, touch an anguish we have not learnt to expect. (A brilliant performance, too, by Mr. Howard da Silva as a wall-eyed thug.) Their idyll is worked out, not only against surroundings of fear, but in long-distance buses, sandwich-bars, out-of-the-way holiday camps, and a marriage office, where day or night, at 20 dollars, the one-line ceremony is there for any couple that walks in. A winking neon light signals to late passengers coming off the bus; when the door is pushed open the first two bars of Mendelssohn's Wedding March bring the registrar, wiping his mouth, into the parlour. This scene bites as lightly and horribly into the memory as a cartoon. One can't help remembering that earlier moment when the youth, fresh from prison and conning the newspaper, remarks "*He* did his murder at sixteen, too." In this climate of horror, the sexual innocence and charm of the young couple move us deeply. Finally—but this fact will have become obvious already—the direction of Nicholas Ray stresses unobtrusively every movement and pause; he doesn't allow his camera a dead instant; his only fault has been that the last third of the film and the final tableau just fail to match the tension of the earlier two-thirds. But this is emphatically a film that I could—and shall—see again.

The Window (already reviewed in this column) makes a fitting pendant. Again the conjunction of realism, taut narrative, and quietly good acting is given a fresh perspective by the point of view: in this case a child's attempt to unburden himself of the murder he has witnessed. The director is Ted Tetzlaff. Both films were produced by Dory Schary as part of a programme for R.K.O. Let us hope that there are more—and as good—to follow.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

A REPERTORY FESTIVAL

Last year the Arts Council presented four of the leading ordinary Repertory Companies —Liverpool, Birmingham, Sheffield and Bristol—in a season at the St. James's. This year at the Embassy they are presenting four of the "Arts Theatre" Repertory Companies with which they are associated. And since it so falls out that none of these can be noticed in these columns in time to encourage attendance, I can only inform those interested of the event and add that I have heard very good accounts of all the companies. Next Monday for two weeks the Glasgow Citizens' Theatre is giving *Let Wives Tak Tent*, an adaptation by Robert Kemp of Molière's *L'Ecole des Femmes*. In the succeeding fortnight the Nottingham Theatre Trust, of which André van Gyseghem is the producer, give *Othello*; and they are followed on July the 12th by the Bristol Old Vic in a new play, *Wilderness of Monkeys*. Meanwhile, the festival has already opened with the Peter Cotes Players from Manchester in an American play, *The Rising Wind*.

The Arts Theatre movement had made up till the war a negligible headway against the dense conservatism of the English Theatre and theatre-going public (whereas both in France and in America it had already by the war established the firmest of footings). Now the resources and the direction of the Arts Council has enabled a start to be made here. On the face of it, it may seem odd that this start should be made not in London but in the Provinces; for the provincial public have not in the past shown themselves to be notably more responsive to serious theatre than the London public—which is itself so little responsive that it cannot even keep the tiny Mercury Theatre going. (This, I gather, is in danger of closing as a theatre. Surely the Arts Council will think it worth while devising some scheme to prevent this?) Whether the promoters will be able to find at their chosen provincial centres a big enough audience to make their ventures worth while remains to be seen. Personally, I fear that there are bound to be disappointments. The belief that there are in England large untapped audiences thirsting for live theatre has always seemed to be over-sanguine. But I hope I am wrong; and in any case the enthusiasm generated and the experience gained in these companies will doubtless pay the Theatre in the end, even if they do not "pay" in the old-fashioned sense.

Assuming the audience, however, there is still the question of what kind of plays to give them. *The Rising Wind*, which is just finishing at the Embassy, seems to me a signal example of a mistaken choice. The Peter Cotes Players from Manchester are, if one can judge from internal evidence, a "progressive" group. They are also a particularly keen and particularly good one. They show all the signs of working very closely together under intelligent but strict direction. This gives to their performance a striking unity and marked intensity and pace. Admirable qualities all, but, unfortunately, not seen to best advantage in the play they have chosen. Technically, it is a conventional post-Ibsen drama except for one short scene where a meeting of progressives is broken up by reactionary students. In this episode the audience in the theatre represented the people at the meeting, the stage representing the platform; and the device was so excitingly managed that some ladies near me jumped up thinking "something had gone wrong" when the toughs emerged from among us and beat up the speakers on the platform.

Except for this scene, the play is a muddled, overloaded conventional piece without a proper centre. It has been chosen presumably only because it has a political theme with a "progressive" bias. But in a play it is not the theme but the treatment of the theme that matters. (This is a distinction to which, I notice, Left-wing theatre people are often blind, choosing or praising plays simply because their subject matter appeals to their political taste.) And yet here, apart from the bad construction of the play itself, the political thinking is absurdly naive on two major points. *The Rising Wind* describes a crisis that arises in the household of a professor in an American university, lately become famous for his work on Atomic Research. He has two daughters; the younger is a starry-eyed progressive engaged to a young history don who is represented as a sort of shining young knight of progressivism; while the elder daughter (excellently impersonated by the talented Joan Miller) is a famous newspaper columnist depicted as a hard-boiled go-getter who in her column has sided with the witch-hunt against un-American activities. The professor himself (a good performance by Wensley Pithey) is a gentle liberal pulled in two ways by this conflict.

The author, being American, cannot avoid seeing that in this situation there are violent underground family conflicts below the overt political issue (and these might have made an interesting play). But he tries to fob us off with a few psycho-analytic clichés which will give a specious motivation to the wicked elder daughter. Apart from their inadequacy, it is cheating to explain only the wicked in this way. If wickedness is a neurotic symptom, then presumably goodness must be, too. If the elder daughter's reaction is shown as deriving from a conflict with a dead mother, then the younger daughter's progressiveness must equally be shown as deriving from—whatever it does derive from.

The relation between the individual's private passions and his political views has hardly yet been explored. But we cannot be as ingenuous about it as we were in the Thirties or as the American progressives seem to be at the moment. Take, as another instance, the issue raised here of the inalienable right to preach and teach any doctrine whatever. This is the principle which the young people in this play fling passionately to and fro. But their passion is too violently engaged for so cool a principle. Indeed, their passion is not really engaged on behalf of that principle at all, but on behalf, simply, of their conviction that they are right and their opponents wrong. For if it were engaged on behalf of the principle, they would be fighting no less violently for the right of their opponents to be heard. Yet it is written all over their crusading faces that they would do everything in their power to prevent some member of the faculty from teaching doctrines which they hate. It doesn't ever occur to them (the playwright doesn't allow it to) that the elder sister's belief in anti-Communism has the same right to be expressed and to be dispassionately assessed as their own views. The discrepancy between their protestations and their actions is what makes their moral indignation seem naive.

T. C. WORSLEY

RADIO NOTES

"We have tried to speak for everybody who was there," say a group of B.B.C. correspondents in a note to a programme (*Five Years After*) in which they record their memories of D-Day and after in France. One's first reaction is to approve. How right to try to "speak for everybody"! Second thoughts suggest that a writer cannot hope to "speak for everybody" unless he first speaks for himself, and that he may lose everything if he tries to include a bit of everything. A sharp observation or a vigorous sentiment of his own will be more illuminating, and more objective, than well-distributed lip-service to other people's. I am thinking of the dramatised narratives, which we get from the Home Service, and particularly of the ambitious story of *The Evacuation from Dunkirk*, of the Sunday before last. As radio this was a failure despite the great interest of the subject; and I think it failed just by trying to be a bit of everything and everybody, instead of taking its own stand. It could have been a piece of history, without accent on emotions (which nevertheless would have emerged); or a Homeric story of thirst and fatigue and survival; or a study of the British genius for improvisation. "I don't think it ever started in any exact way...the Admiral got a telephone call." The specially made, last-minute scaling ladders (because Dunkirk harbour had no proper piers), the pencilled charts, the little ships—these sticks of fact would have built up the improvisation story if only they had been massed in greater detail.

Instead, they were left about loose to leave time for sorties into flabby emotionalism, bandyings of "chum" and "soldier," heavy-handed placing of "human interest." "Yes—the little ships did their stuff!" O—I thought—allow us to feel this for ourselves! Worst was the handling of the story of the women who made tea (and 5,000 sausage rolls) at the first wayside stop in England. "And then you were there . . . like angels." "Yes,—we—*didwhatwecould*." Why couldn't Mr. Martin Chisholm, who wrote the script, and Mr. Maurice Brown, who produced, realise that the greater the poignancy, the harder must be the discipline? (Boccaccio's description of the plague in Florence is a valuable instance of the power of unsentimental reporting.) One cannot accept these hushed voices, tense with all the right feelings, and it is a waste of a great story to tell it in that way.

After a second hearing *The Unblest*, Mr. Henry Reed's play-story of Leopardi's unhappy childhood, still leaves a rather ambiguous impression. It does, on the whole, command attention throughout its ninety minutes. But this, I now feel, is sustained rather by Mr. Reed's skill in evoking a remote and strange way of life than by his picture of the pathos of the hunchback's situation. There is a something posed and over-literary, particularly in the portrait of the gruesome mother, the Countess Adelaide. Mr. Reed may not be exaggerating when he makes her use such phrases as "the dutiful administration of the quackeries of doctors" or "I was unaware that every arrangement had to be communicated to you"—but surely art requires that he should tone them down. Because of this stridency, it was possible to feel irritated with Mr. Reed's Leopardi for not finding some way out of his impasse. The lightly-scored passages, particularly the delightful sketch of a visit to the Leopardis of a more worldly family, were the more effective. As the gay visiting Countess Lydia Sherwood gave a most savourable performance, to which the subtleties of Mr. Heppenstall's production contributed an elegant lilt.

After some assiduous listening to the broadcast concerts of the *Elgar Festival* I still find it difficult not to dislike this music. A talk by a friend and admirer, Mr. Basil Maine, (in *Music Magazine* last Sunday) gave relief to the feeling. Mr. Maine called it "Elgar's Many-Sided Mind," and told us of the versatility of the composer's interests—his dogs, his drives to Pershore for "bread and cheese and ale," his habit of playing records of his favourite comedian immediately after Mozart, his racing and his favourite bookie. This is just the effect his music often has on me: that of a man who can do many things, isn't absolutely engaged by any of them, and might be a little contemptuous of himself if he was. *The Introduction and Allegro for Strings* leaves on me the impression of a rather bad-mannered boy, whistling his way along a beach, hands in pockets, occasionally kicking stones. Mr. Maine admires just that versatility (he also spoke of a "unifying principle," without saying what it was), which is, I think, the poison of the English amateur spirit.

MARK OGILVIE

Picasso Lithographs, at the Hanover Gallery

This exhibition at the Hanover Gallery contains eighty-five recent lithographs and two cases of miniature bronzes. Perhaps half the lithographs, but certainly all the bronzes, are seen here for the first time in this country. Not that this matters one way or the other: all are brilliant enough and new enough for us to experience the full shock of them at this excellent show. The now notorious *Dove of Peace* is here and is by no means "like a snapshot of a woodpigeon, at first glance," Mr. Bell! Like everything else by Picasso, the bird has alighted on the shores of our visible world after a flight, at the speed of light, straight out of the heart of a metaphysical imagination. Because his brain has stored away every texture and every trick of natural appearances, Picasso's creatures materialise amid a dazzling display of effects. Feathersoftness being one such effect, a natural quality he has observed and stored away in his magazine, it has come out with a soft explosion when he thought, "dove!" This *Dove* is conceived, not in ink or chalk, but in something ideal—in short it is created out of *feathersoftness*! It was always like this with Picasso: the least earthbound or pedestrian, the most visionary and metaphysical of painters, he always by-passes mere appearances. Where some moderns have been able to manipulate, as it were, the texture of visual appearances, so that they took on a new interest and vitality, Picasso has given us new versions of the objects themselves—the things behind the appearances. Thus his creativeness operates beyond the visual realm. He succeeds in expressing, not only our visual reaction to a thing, but our total experience of it, through every sense, and with every faculty. It is therefore quite inadequate merely to discuss the pictorial mechanics of his works, brilliant, resourceful and overwhelmingly convincing though they almost invariably are.

"The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists," at the Unity Theatre

It was at the turn of the century that Robert Tressall, a house-painter, wrote the story of working-class life which he called *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*. Since that time much paint has been spilled and grumbled over. But Tressall's evocation of the talk of a gang of Cockney workers is as intimate, as amusing—and as touching—as it was then. Nor has there been anything else quite like it, though perhaps Mr. Maugham came nearest in some passages of *Liza of Lambeth*. The talk is vital enough to give warmth to the adaptation, which Mr. Rowbotham has made for Unity Theatre; and one feels also, all the time, its curious diffidence and sweetness, which must have been something in the character of the author. It is a serious difficulty for an adapter, that the novel was almost entirely static, a succession of *tableaux vivants*, negligible in construction and development. The producer, Mr. John Spag, has been wise to let these tableaux unfold and speak for themselves, at some length, so that we have time to pick up their points. The mild climax which Mr. Rowbotham has added doesn't really mar the sense of continuity, of a piece of life which goes on after one has left the theatre. The play makes a good deal of Tressall's Socialism and this is quite intriguing where it resurrects those Conservative prejudices, stoutly held by the men themselves, which made them scoff at Unions and reform. Elsewhere the emotional appeal is perhaps dated, like the savage conditions by which it was inspired, but even this still keeps the rather attractive simplicity of Tressall's book. The production is well served by its actors, notably by Mr. George Tovey, as chief cockney wit of the gang, and by Mr. Joe Levine as an unreliable foreman tending towards drink and malevolence.

Massimo Campigli, at the St. George's Gallery

Something ancient from pre-Christian Italy, and containing Greco-Roman as well as Byzantine elements, is the force which drives this contemporary from Milan to create a flattened imagery of doll-like female figures. Dry biscuit colours, ochres, off-whites, cool browns and whitish powdery blues are rendered with the mattest of surfaces, dried up and even cracked here and there: pictures painted last year and this have already an almost timeless texture. Yet they belong unmistakably to the present time: the very simplicity and near-symmetry of their images as well, of course, as their design, and their handling (a dry blunt brush gives Campigli his characteristic touch), proclaim the modern genesis of these very interesting paintings. Sitting in twos on sofas, or at a piano—or grouped, three or four, in a sort of white-walled yard—Campigli's doll-women have waists like a flattened diabolo, neat breasts and spherical heads. Furthermore they are invariably seen full face or profile: but perhaps the more subtle half-positions cannot be stated with this degree of formalisation by a lesser genius than Picasso. The space created for the setting of these figures is shallow: as in Giotto there is the feeling of a wall running behind the figures and parallel to the picture surface. Sometimes a panelled wall is actually depicted: but always this flattened world of the ancient fresco is Campigli's special terrain. Perhaps two things in particular contribute to the success of these works, making us feel that we are in the presence of a most unusual artist. First there is complete conviction, poetically: this curious subject matter is no pedantic, surrealist revival of period atmosphere and detail—indeed for Campigli it is all quaite natural: this is obvious. And secondly, Campigli is a very good craftsman; there is a workmanlike calmness about these pictures: he does not attempt anything beyond his powers of execution.

Correspondence

DOCTORS AND SPONGERS

SIR,—The article by D. R. Cargill on the ophthalmic section of the Health Service (your issue of June 4th) is dogmatic but far from accurate.

The cost of supplying spectacles to all who need them is very high, but it should be borne in mind that before July 5th the public spent annually over £20 million on spectacles despite the fact that so many poor and old persons did not have the glasses they needed badly. A fully comprehensive ophthalmic service for the nation must be, of necessity, a costly affair, but it is likely to prove the best bargain any government can make, for it will pay high dividends in increased health, efficiency and productivity.

Under the Health Service, ophthalmic opticians work for fixed fees and the profit motive has been eliminated. Most opticians have been working very hard since July 5th, including a considerable amount of overtime, and find it necessary to examine many more patients to earn the same remuneration as before. A special Working Party is to investigate opticians' costs and overhead expenses, and we are confident the results will show that the original fees fixed for sight-testing and dispensing were reasonable.

It is not surprising that the great majority of patients who consult ophthalmic opticians need new spectacles, but in many cases patients are advised that spectacles are not required, or the existing spectacles are still satisfactory. Ministry figures show that, on an average, opticians prescribe two pairs of spectacles, one for distance and one for reading, for about 30 per cent. of patients. Recent figures from a large eye hospital in a Northern industrial area showed that no less than 50 per cent. of patients had been prescribed two pairs of glasses by the medical refractionists at the hospital.

The mention of sight-testing in the Services was rather unfortunate, for although it is true that the sight-testing in the Services was carried out almost entirely by medical men, the standard was of such an inferior quality that it would not be tolerated under civilian conditions. The school ophthalmic clinics, too, are staffed by medical men and the standard of sight-testing is equally deplorable. Seven or eight children are often seen each hour, and the work is speedy rather than thorough.

Ophthalmic opticians are proud of their long record of excellent service to the community, and are looking forward to an early Registration Act that will enable them to raise still further their standards of training and examination. The present training consists of a three years' full-time course followed by a further year's clinical experience, and the modern ophthalmic optician is a highly skilled practitioner specialising in the examination of the eyes and their functions, and in the preservation and improvement of vision.

It is the policy of the optical profession to make the ophthalmic section of the Health Service the finest in the world, and opticians have co-operated loyally to this end. They are worried, however, by the tendency to put the whole accent on cost rather than on the quality of the service provided.

A final word for D. R. Cargill—it would be a bad day for the sight of the people when the control of all the sight-testing came into the hands of the medical refractionists; for most of the modern techniques have been developed by opticians.

Abuses there are, but is it surprising that there have been some growing pains in a scheme of such magnitude?

S. BLACK
Director, Information Bureau
Association of Optical Practitioners

SIR,—It is a long time since I have read such twaddle as this article written by D. R. Cargill, in a vain attempt to justify the unholy mess into which the National Health Service is getting itself.

The eye service is costing too much—we said it would months before the N.H.S. Act came into being—but whose fault is that? We asked the Minister to maintain the grant-in-aid method of benefit which worked very well under the N.H.I. Act, but he was adamant about the free-for-all. The opticians are being penalised for a demand which they have *not* created. And when your correspondent states that only doctors should do refraction, he is ignoring the scientific development of this branch of physics, for which the opticians have been responsible, and in which the medical profession played very little part. It was only after the ophthalmic opticians had developed the refraction procedure until it became a science that the doctors—finding that they had missed something which could mean easy money—began to howl that they only should do the sight-testing. In our School we are teaching medical practitioners to do refraction; and we have medical practitioners who sit for our examination. The claim that doctors are the only people who should do sight-testing is pretentious and absurd.

The ophthalmic opticians are being made to pay for a demand which the Minister and his free-for-all mentality and policy are responsible. The whole N.H.S. Act is of "utility" standard, and a pretty shoddy "utility" at that. The doctors no longer practise medicine: they fill in forms, write prescriptions for gallons of medicine, buckets of barbiturates (to keep their patients quiet), and yards and yards of dressings for minor abrasions. How many doctors have the time even to bring out their stethoscopes? They have gone back to the Middle Ages and are treating symptoms.

The great strides the technicians in ophthalmic optics made prior to the Act have gone to pot. The standard of quality of frames and lenses, and the technical quality of the work carried out by the manufacturers, is as low as it was prior to 1914. And who is to blame? Certainly not a harassed profession and industry without whom not any form of ophthalmic service could have been possible, including the N.H.S. Act.

J. ROSS-MANSELL,
Ph.D., B.Sc., D. Opt.
The Institute of Optical Science,
2 Clements Inn, Strand, London, W.C.2.

MR. BEVAN AND THE DENTISTS

SIR,—The writer of your comment "Mr. Bevan and the Dentists" in your issue of June 4, has been misled by the persistent propaganda which has recently been levelled against the dental profession.

In the first place, it must be borne in mind that the whole basis for the remuneration of dentists under a National Health Service is the recommendation of the Spens Dental Committee. This Inter-Departmental Committee recommended a net remuneration on the 1939 value of money for dentists in existing circumstances of £1,600 per annum for 1,500 hours chairside work. The Committee stated further that this remuneration would only provide a proper income if it were adjusted to present conditions in such a way as to "have regard not only to estimates of the change in the value of money, but to the increases which have in fact taken place since 1939 in incomes in other professions."

The Minister of Health insisted that the "betterment factor" applicable to the pre-war figure of £1,600 was 20 per cent, and that from the net income of £1,920 thus obtained there must be made a deduction in respect of superannuation rights, which the profession enjoys under the National Health Service but did not previously possess.

The net remuneration "before the deduction of superannuation," should therefore be approximately £1,900 for a 33-hour week.

The sum of £4,800 quoted by your contributor is, of course, a gross remuneration from which there must in the first place be deducted 52 per cent, the figure agreed by the Ministry as appropriate for overhead expenses. This leaves a net figure, before the deduction of superannuation, of approximately £2,300. There is, however, no indication whatever that this net income of £2,300 was earned in a working week of 33 chairside hours. Indeed, the evidence is all the other way. The demand for dental treatment has been so much greater than was originally anticipated that the majority of dentists, at any rate, in industrial areas, are finding it essential to work much more than 33 chairside hours per week.

There was no excuse for the Ministry's original estimate of £8,000,000. This Association, when the scheme was first announced, publicly stated that it estimated that the probable initial cost might be somewhere in the neighbourhood of £30,000,000.

If dentists are earning sums in excess of the Spens Committee recommendations for a working week of 33 chairside hours, then there may be a case for an adjustment in the existing scale of fees. No evidence has, however, been produced, either by the Minister or by anyone else that this is so, and it is only when the Report of the Working Party is published that the necessary factual basis for any conclusion on this matter will be available.

It is for this reason that the profession has refused to co-operate with the Minister in his present reduction in the scale of fees. Any such reduction must inevitably prejudice negotiations subsequent to the publication of the report of the fact-finding committee. If, for example, it were proved from the report that the original time factors were logical ones, is it possible to imagine that the Minister of Health would agree to increasing the fees for dental treatment by from 20 per cent to 25 per cent in order to bring it back to the figures originally adopted in July, 1948? Experience has shown that it would be quite unrealistic to imagine that this would be the case, and this alone justified the attitude of the profession.

S. DONALD COX, *Assistant Secretary*
British Dental Association,
13 Hill Street, W.1.

MEDICINE INCLUDED

SIR,—The doctor's surgeries are cluttered up with people needing a fresh prescription. To keep these people away from the waiting room many doctors are issuing prescriptions for phenomenal sizes. This may be one way out but it is satisfactory neither to the patient nor the pharmacist. Many of these medicines will not keep in the diluted condition, and from the pharmacist's point of view it is unsatisfac-

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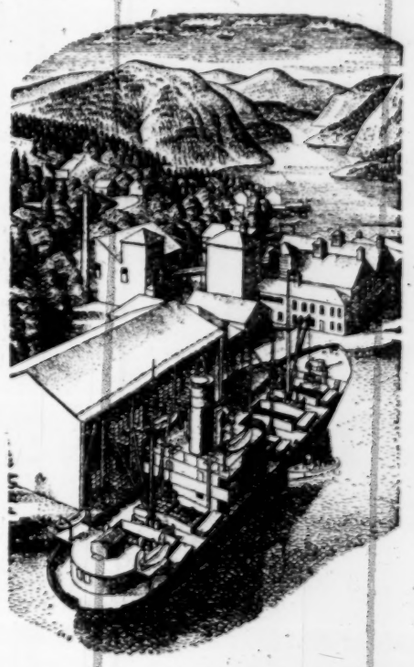
Paper is a world-wide affair. Across the North Sea in Norway and Sweden and on the other side of the Atlantic in Newfoundland, Bowaters mills are steadily increasing their output of groundwood and sulphite pulp. From these widely separated sources come most of the raw materials required for Bowaters paper and board manufacturing operations. To meet Bowaters demand in Britain alone for groundwood pulp, which is produced by grinding bark-stripped logs against giant revolving grindstones, over a quarter of a million tons are imported and distributed to their mills each year. The vast scope and potentialities of the pulp and paper trades have been continuously developed by the Bowater Organisation for its customers during the last half century. It is equipped to handle every aspect of this complex industry on an international scale.



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tory in that he is being paid for a normal-sized bottle by a system of averaging.

The doctor is permitted to issue post-dated prescriptions, but this means a lot of writing—the other way would be for him to issue a prescription for the normal size and endorse the script "supply six bottles." These would have to be supplied by the same pharmacist, who would be quite satisfied with the arrangement and supply a renewal when required.

In rural areas the N.H.S. does not seem entirely satisfactory. The patients are expected to come in to the surgeries, often miles away, there is a long wait, this often fruitless as the doctor decides he has seen enough and clears the waiting room, telling those waiting that they will have to come back in the evening or to-morrow. Add to this the fact that many of these rural doctors are undertaking the dispensing, usually done by unqualified personnel. Medicine is of the cheapest—the doctor being paid a fixed sum per head to provide this, and human nature being what it is—anxious to make a good profit on it. Little chance to change doctors: in a sparsely populated area there is no one else to have.

The rural dweller is told that the doctor is bound to supply medicines—this is not the fact ; the patient is allowed the choice of doctor or pharmacist in the country. Many doctors have given up dispensing, but others, in the hope of a big profit, have undertaken all they can. W. M. GEORGE

50 Thoroughfare,
Halesworth, Suffolk.

TIED HOUSES

SIR,—Mr. Parson's article on tied houses omitted completely the practical reasons for the system under present conditions, and whilst I entirely agree with him in principle, I fail to see how tied cottages can at present be abolished without hardship to the farmer and possible harm to agriculture.

Obviously it is impossible for a farmer in an isolated village to obtain a skilled worker unless he can offer accommodation. If the worker—let us take as an example the all-important cowman—proves unsatisfactory, as frequently happens nowadays when milk production and care of live stock is becoming more and more specialised, the farmer has no hope of replacing him because he now has no house to offer another cowman. In that case the abolition of the tied cottage could quite conceivably act against the country's interests in loss of milk production and livestock. It is, of course, the small farmer who has but two or three cottages and has to rely on one cowman who suffers most. To suggest that the unsatisfactory worker would move to fresh employment and the accommodation that went with it—assuming the tied system is retained—is not necessarily valid as, in these days of labour shortage, alternative employment of some kind is almost always available in any area.

The obvious solution seems to lie in the provision of adequate houses in the rural areas, for, even under a Socialist economy, the farmer must be protected against bad workmanship if he is to obtain maximum output from his holding. EILEEN GUY

Riverside Farm, Tichborne,
Alresford, Hants.

MEDIATION IN GREECE

SIR,—May a Greek Moderate be forgiven for feeling embittered at the contrasted approach to the problems of Germany and his country by the Western Powers? By what process of logic is it justifiable for Mr. Acheson, Mr. Bevin and M. Schuman to propose free elections and the abolition of the "people's police" as a desirable improvement in the Russian zone of Germany and to reject Russian proposals of very much the same sort for Greece? Or, for that matter, for the Russians to act conversely.

The see-saw of international politics is often confusing, but not since the start of the civil war in Greece has it been so clearly underlined that an ex-ally is of less importance than an ex-enemy. Greek Moderates, who wonder if it is not better to be defeated than on the winning side of a world war, can at least find support for their reflections when it appears that the Western Powers prefer the Greek civil war to go on rather than adopt the rational method of mediation, a caretaker Government and, ultimately, free elections.

Is it that the very idea of settling a problem is abhorrent to the vested interests which appear to be establishing themselves on the rock of continued disagreement between the Four Powers on major issues? If that is not so, may it be suggested that the Foreign Ministers now in Paris should try their hands on Greece, where the problems are much easier of solution than the German differences appear to be? Agreement in the lesser field may well give a pointer to success in the larger sphere.

E. H. ATHANASSOGLOU

15 New Street, Bishopsgate.

THE EISLER CASE

SIR,—Critic's hopes that Gerhart Eisler "will now give a course of lectures behind the iron curtain about the benefits of the rule of law in England and explain that it is a good idea to have a Judiciary which is independent of the Executive" were soon disappointed. Critic had heard Eisler to be "all gratitude to the wonderful English people and fulsome about the fairness of the British courts." He might be interested in the following reports published in Czech newspapers:

> . . . My release was only due to the protesting masses of the British people and the whole international progressive camp. I am glad, he stated, to be on Czechoslovak territory where the Americans can't get me. Every day spent by Gerhart Eisler in London meant permanent danger of an American intervention . . .
>
> Regarding his arrest, Gerhart Eisler said, it was done on American initiative. This is quite natural, because, as he recalled, the English are now jumping to the tune of the Americans' whistling . . ." (Lidove Noviny, June 1st.)
>
> . . .For the first time after many years I am again in a country where I feel real freedom and where conditions are settled. Finally, I am in a State where American commands do not count." (Lidove Noviny, June 2nd.)

Yet in all of Eisler's utterances I can't find any reference to "the fairness of the British courts."

65 Beaufort Park, J. W. BRUEGEL
London, N.W.11.

THE LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

SIR,—Will you allow me to use Mr. Harry Samuels' own words to ask him and those who share his view to answer this plain question: Which is the more repressive—to compel a few totalitarians to find work outside a particular private enterprise or to compel more than eleven thousand partners in that enterprise to work alongside a few totalitarians?

To the mind of Mr. Harry Samuels the action of the John Lewis Partnership is political persecution. To my mind that assertion is patently untrue.

As the Editor of the *Economist* has been good enough to allow me to say recently to his readers, "Partnership must be a relation of trust and should be a relation of affection. Why should partners in a private enterprise, even though there be thousands of them, be expected to trust and to work zestfully for the advantage of people engaged in an open conspiracy to bring upon this country the fate of Czechoslovakia?" J. SPEDAN LEWIS

35 Cavendish Square, W.1.

THE SITUATION IN UGANDA

SIR,—The Colonial Secretary has instructed Mr. Joseph Sheridan, a former Chief Justice of the East African Court of Appeal, to make an inquiry into the situation in Uganda, where it is admitted five Africans have been killed and 1,400 imprisoned, and where the Bataka, the Council of the Elders of the clans, and the Uganda African Farmers' Union have been suppressed.

In view of the gravity of the unrest in Uganda, it is to be hoped that a representative commission from this country, including trade union and co-operative members, will be sent to Uganda.

The unrest appears to arise from two popular demands—first, for the democratisation of the native assembly and, second, for the right of the farmers to process their cotton crops co-operatively and to export in bulk to Britain without the intervention of profiteering middle-men. These demands are reasonable and progressive and ought to be welcomed by a Labour Colonial Secretary.

The Governor of Uganda has ascribed the agitation to Communist initiative. This apparently is based on the fact that the demands of the Bataka were forwarded to the Russian delegation at the United Nations and were voiced there by Mr. Gromyko.

Reports from Uganda, however, indicate that, in fact, Communist influence has been negligible; but the condemnation of a movement which has mass support as "Communist" has inevitably had the opposite effect to what the authorities desire.

Confidence in Labour's administration of Uganda will be restored only by a thorough investigation of the grievances of the people and by bold measures to remedy them.

FENNER BROCKWAY, *Chairman*,
Congress of Peoples Against Imperialism.

Swaraj House, 32 Percy Street, W.1.

SIR THOMAS MORE

SIR,—Mr. John B. Morrall offers "to correct several inaccuracies" in my view of Sir Thomas More—by which he appears to mean, to state two differences of opinion.

I said that More despised monasticism. Mr. Morrall protests that in his youth he considered entering the Carthusian order and becoming a priest. He certainly spent four years, aged 21 to 25, in this state. He then rejected all such projects and plunged into secular affairs. According to Cresacre More (a fervent Catholic) he was repelled by the corruption of monasticism. This is confirmed by his references to monasticism in *Utopia*. He may, of course have retained an admiration for ideal monasticism; but as ideals are subjective and variable of interpretation, I prefer to use words in their concrete and verifiable sense. Mr. Morrall's other point seems to be an explanation of More's inconsistency, not a refutation of it, and therefore has no relevance to any statement of mine. H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

Christchurch, Oxford.

SIR,—I am afraid that the printer has treated my letter on St. Thomas More (published in your issue of June 4) with some freedom. Perhaps my calligraphy is responsible.

In the fifth sentence of my second paragraph I am represented as referring to More's *gran infinito*. Perhaps this new concept demands exploration by devotees of the more romantic forms of Existentialism; but what I actually wrote was Dante's famous phrase—*gran rifiuto*.

My following sentence has also been mangled considerably and my grammatical reputation compels me to point out that its opening should read: "Margaret Roper, who washed the hairshirt (a strange garb for one who 'depised monasticism'). . . ." Apart from the printer's substitution of "policy" for "polity" in my next paragraph, I have nothing further to complain about.

New College, JOHN B. MORRALL
Oxford.

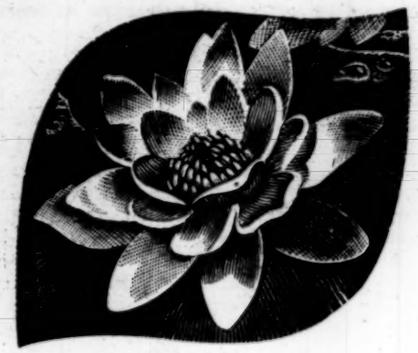
IRISH POETS

SIR,—Of the three "surprising omissions" which Mr. Austin Clarke finds in *Contemporary Irish Poetry*, edited by Valentin Iremonger and myself, I should like to point out that two of these poets—namely Messrs. Patrick Kavanagh and Lyle Donaghy—would not consent to be represented, for reasons best known to themselves. As we say in Ulster, this fact is "unfortunate but true."

It is news to me that we "owe something to Donagh MacDonagh's anthology, *Poems from Ireland*, which was published recently in Dublin." The original idea for an Irish anthology of contemporary verse was, I understand, my own. Mr. Iremonger and I completed our selection long before *Poems from Ireland* appeared. In any case, this latter selection consists wholly of poems that have appeared in a single Irish newspaper, *The Irish Times*. Although most good Irish poets have contributed to that excellent journal they have, of course, written elsewhere as well.

ROBERT GREACEN

18 Palace Gardens Terrace, W.8.



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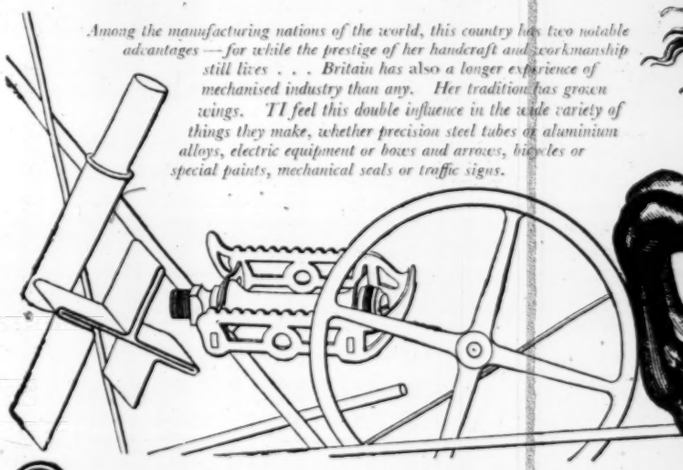

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

These fragments I have shored against my ruins : the egotism of Mr. Connolly is now well-shored up. He is the most vividly matured and constructed ruin of a generation which understood the aesthetic of this kind of thing thoroughly. Hammer-and-sickle men from the pre-fabs who have been coming round for a decade hoping to clear the site, find that it is not for clearing and that the edifice still holds brisk services at uncertain hours by the West door :

> We must go on doing what we like doing best as if it were the illusions of humanism which are real and the realities of nihilism that prove a nightmare.

And Baedeker, when it stars the monument, will draw attention to the arrow slits, the hidden fortified strength of the structure which combines the belligerence of the Irish ruin with the brilliance of the English Folly ; and, as a historical curiosity, typical of the period, will point to the appeal for funds for the restoration, outside. As if to forestall the ultimate catastrophe Mr. Connolly identified himself with his death-wish, dug himself in ingeniously as a ruin in advance, and, by this paradox, averted it :

> Never compete, was my new commandment, never again to go in for things, to be put up and blackballed, to score off anyone ; only in that way could the sin of Worldliness be combated, the Splendid Failure be prepared which was the ultimate " gesture."

The quotations are taken from the *Enemies of Promise** which has been out of print since the first instalment of catastophe in 1938 and is now re-issued. This book was an inquiry into the problems of how to be a serious writer, how to write a book that would last ten years, an examination of the enemies of writers. Since the most dangerous enemy is the Fifth Column ambushed in the ingratiating thicket of the self, the richest part of the book was the Gibbonian fragment of autobiography : *A Georgian Boyhood*. Pet nt and without reverence, this piece blasts its way through the cotton wool of time and is one of our memorable pictures of adolescence and school life. The self-portrait and the self-criticism are done with Mr. Connolly's most happily destructive comedy and in the edifice they form an indiscreet tablet to the English public school boy of the Munich generation. " Were I to deduce any system from my feelings on leaving Eton, it might be called *The Theory of Permanent Adolescence*." Mr. Connolly has never resisted a new theory — they rose like folklore, between the wars, when the main orthodoxies went—and like flares his generalisations go up and fix the landscape for the moment in the frightening noon of a theatrical light. In that light, outlines are true if the shadows cast are false. For example, observation from outside appears to confirm the theory of permanent adolescence :

> It is the theory that the experiences undergone by boys at the great public schools, their glories and disappointments, are so intense as to dominate their lives and to arrest their development. From this it results that the greater part of the ruling class remains adolescent, school-minded, self-conscious, cowardly, sentimental and in the last analysis homosexual. Early laurels weigh like lead and of many of the boys whom I knew at Eton, I can say that their lives are over . . . Once again romanticism with its death-wish is to blame for it lays an emphasis on childhood, on a fall from grace which is not compensated for by any doctrine of future redemption ; we enter the world trailing clouds of glory, childhood and boyhood follow and we are damned. Certainly growing up seems a hurdle which most of us are unable to take and the lot of the artist is unpleasant in England, because he is one of the few who, bending but not breaking, is able to throw off these early experiences. For maturity is the quality that the English dislike most and the fault of artists is that, like certain foreigners, they are mature.

Outside observation seems to confirm this opinion ; but once the light of that flare has gone down and one thinks again, the same criticism can be made, here more and there less, of other forms of English education and indeed of English life in general. The whole stress of English life is upon the formation of the social animal.

The main issues in Mr. Connolly's polemic are not decided, and the spirited analysis of English prose has grown in suggestion. The journalistic, arguing, familiar, realistic and vernacular styles are not dislodged, but flashes from " old Mandarin " occasionally sparkle in a sentence. They do no more than sparkle : and I would say that the doctrine of the best word, the most exciting image, rather than the sober ease of the familiar style, has been the enemy of cadence and the long sentence. Mr. Connolly's advice is still there to be taken :

> From the realists, the puritans, the colloquial writers and talkie-novelists there is also much that (the writer) will take and much that he will leave. The cursive style, the agreeable manners, the precise and poetical impact of Forster's diction, the lucidity of Maugham, last of the great professional writers, the timing of Hemingway, the smooth cutting-edge of Isherwood, the indignation of Lawrence, the honesty of Orwell, these will be necessary and the touch of those few journalists who give to every word in their limited vocabulary its current topical value. But above all it is construction that will be learned from the realists, that discipline in the conception and execution of a book, that planning which gives simply written things the power to endure, the constant pruning without which the imagination like a tea-rose reverts to the wilderness.

And from the Mandarins :

> Art and patience, the striving for perfection, the horror of clichés, the creative delight in their (? the) material, in the possibilities of the long sentence and the splendour and subtlety of the composed phrase . . .
>
> Our language is a sulky and inconstant beauty and at any given moment it is important to know what liberties she will permit.

This lightning campaign of Mr. Connolly's, like all his best work, is half-foray, half-picnic in the rear of our forces ; what sounds like the popping of corks may turn out to be the ping of bullets, and, written as it was before the dejection of the larger war, it is both wise and damaging. The central difficulty of the question of style remains : writers write as they are. Even among the " made " writers we cannot imagine them making themselves other than they now appear. Was Maugham seriously tempted by the prose style of the Bible ? There are predispositions. Style that is not self-discovery is mannerism. In the end, the best writers turn out to be those who know most faithfully what they are and, who appear also, to be in some mysterious telepathic intimacy with their time. How did Orwell—whose portrait is briefly and vividly drawn in Mr. Connolly's chapters on Eton—nurture in those unlikely surroundings, the wintry independence of mind which appears to foreshadow a prose, so grey, swift and easterly ? I do not doubt that Orwell took thought : I do not believe that he chose. We see at once that Dostoevsky, Balzac, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy are people who know what they are and are extraordinary people, before we notice that their prose is bad. (Perhaps the ascetics notice only the prose.)

To this argument of the " no style " school, Mr. Connolly would still reply that these writers wrote when the cultural bank balance was large, before language had become debased, before the competition of journalism had become vicious, before the spread of literacy had shortened the life of literature by spawning its imitations. I find it hard to believe that one important book in the plain idiom, or any other that was current, would not at once expose the pretenders. To discover his style—even if it is a bad one like Balzac's : *il ne savait pas sa langue*—is to find the indispensable slipway, without which a writer may fall into the water and sink but cannot be launched.

Style becomes a question of dogmatic importance only when the lever of release does not work. At present English literature appears to be poor in its material ; it may be that the still dominant style of realism, reformed though it is, is not the proper lever of release. I suppose this would be Mr. Connolly's opinion : the reasons usually given for sterility—the nature of our beliefs, religious and philosophical—may be illusory. The true reasons may be technical, and those, too, have their ethic. Styles have their life cycles. Writing of Firbank, for example, Mr. Connolly says :

> It will be seen that dandyism, despite its roots in the *status quo* and its tendency to pessimism, is a tenable position—since any position which can be shown to produce good writing is tenable—for as long as the writer can count on a natural constitutional gaiety to inform his lyricism. When that disappears as in Housman, the wit becomes bitter, the lyricism morbid. It is, therefore, suitable to young writers with plenty of money. They have their roots in manure but the orchid blooms the richer for it, until ultimately the bloom dies down and the manure is left. Tibullus, Rochester, Watteau and Leopardi—the greatest perfectionist of them all—died before this could happen.

Enemies of Promise is a book written in epigrams and in epitaphs :

> Critics in England do not accept bribes but one day they discover that in a sense their whole life is an accepted bribe . . .
>
> The satire of Evelyn Waugh in his early books was derived from his ignorance of life. He found cruel things funny because he did not understand them . . .
>
> . . . a writer who is not prepared to be lonely in his youth must if he is to succeed face loneliness in middle age.
>
> It is vain to accuse people of escaping from contemporary reality . . . We cannot all do our best work with the sun in our eyes.
>
> It is by a blend of lively curiosity and intelligent selfishness that the artists who wish to mature late, who feel too old to die, the Goethes, Tolstoys, Voltaires, Titians and Verdis, reach a fruitful senescence.
>
> Whom the gods wish to destroy they first call promising.

The way of the Perfectionist is hard ; the hours of the day pass as he decides what not to be, as he tutors himself in the delusions of choice. But Mr. Connolly is a militant Perfectionist ; in flights the arrows come down from the tower. Nothing stings like Taste. And as a critic, not only does he write with more spirit and wit and idiosyncrasy than anyone else living, but he has the virtue of being against the current, of not escaping from literary questions by calling them something else.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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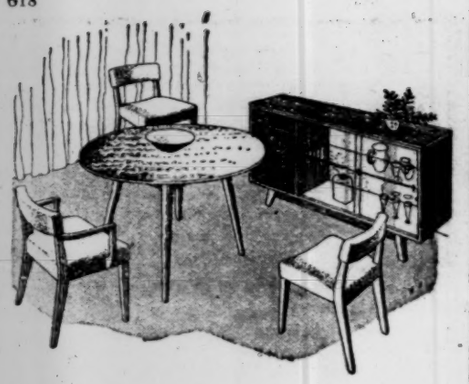

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A GUIDE-BOOK FOR THE EDUCATED

Fabled Shore. By ROSE MACAULAY. *Hamish Hamilton.* 15s.

Spain, for obvious reasons, is to-day one of the countries least visited by British tourists. And there are people who say that they could not possibly enjoy a Spanish holiday under the Franco régime. Yet here is Miss Rose Macaulay, whom no one could accuse of being reactionary or complacent or insensitive, enjoying one like mad and making a very readable book of it. For this, I submit, we should be grateful to her.

She had no ulterior motive; she was not there to hobnob with officials or intellectuals or to make a political or sociological report; she was there to drive her own car from Port Bou to Cape St. Vincent. One could wish that she had let just a little sociology, etc., in—she never, I think, mentions if people look well fed or not—but it would appear that, having made up her mind to write a guide-book which should cover three thousand years of the past and have a continued sale in the future, she dismissed the present régime as a passing nuisance. The result is what was intended—a guide-book for educated people. Some readers may resent her introductory confession that she "finds buildings and landscape more aesthetically pleasing than the animal creation," but the operative word here is *aesthetically*; Miss Macaulay, as everyone should know, has a well-developed social consciousness, but she also has an aesthetic one, and, unlike many people, she is able to keep them separate.

There are two kinds of travel books worth reading: the kind which is an end in itself and the kind which encourages you to travel. *Fabled Shore* is one of the latter. After reading D. H. Lawrence you might think twice before following in his footsteps; you wonder if Etruria or Mexico really exists and, if you are a Lawrence fan, you may feel like leaving well alone. After reading Miss Macaulay you know that Spain exists and are all agog to go there; what is more, you will take her book with you. Her descriptions of landscapes and buildings are not at all forced; she is no more ashamed to use unconcentrated words like "charming," "lovely," "delightful," than she is afraid to pepper you with pellets of concentrated history. But she gets away with both; her easy phrases convince and her hard facts come easy:

> And there against the western sky stood Malaga la Bella between its viney mountains, climbing up from its white sea front and deep blue bay, and it looked like a circular wedge of pale cheese ("*pâleur dorée*," as Gautier said of the women's complexions) with blue-green veins of mould, which were trees and shrubs and gardens, winding about it. . . .

This is a typical piece of alluring writing; it is followed by a typical and intended anti-climax—"this cheesey look made it appear very beautiful to a cheese-starved Briton"—which, taken out of its context, might appear an irritating flippancy. But, since every page here is packed with geography and history, a vein of such flightiness was needed, and Miss Macaulay does not tap it too often.

It is refreshing to get so much architecture and history from someone who is neither historian nor art critic. The amateur, as so often, proves not only more readable than the expert, but also more down to earth. Miss Macaulay obviously enjoys architecture, but she is no purist about it:

> The guide-books have always complained about the overloaded classical-baroque façade, out of harmony with the castle-like Gothic structure and the interior; "the demon of churriguerismo," says Murray, "has been at work." I liked it. After all, why should a façade be in harmony with the interior? One does not see them both at once . . .

Her judgments may be both literary and snap, but they are none the worse for that. The writer of this more personal kind of guide-book is like the poet; he is giving you not the Object but the Object Plus and the plus includes his own temperament and his mood at the moment *and* the weather at the moment. Thus my own memories of Granada are very different from Miss Macaulay's. She very sensibly following Théophile Gautier ("*Il faut visiter les pays dans leur saison violente*"), visited the Alhambra in the height of summer, whereas I saw this masterpiece of summer architecture on a grey, wet day in April. So, while I did not feel nearly as enthusiastic as Miss Macaulay for the work of the Moors, I felt much more kindly towards what she calls "the lumpish palace of Charles V." Such personal disagreements enhance the charm of a travel book as they do that of an anthology.

But perhaps the greatest joy of this book is the author's masterly way with her predecessors. She drives through Catalonia, Valencia, Andalusia, Portugal, losing her keys and bits of her car, giving lifts to and pointed at by all and sundry, and all the time she has Polybius and Avienus and Strabo and Martial peering over her shoulder while the dyspeptic Richard Ford and the sentimental Hans Andersen hang on the running boards, exposed to the burning sun and to an even more burning wit. Miss Macaulay is too tolerant and sensitive to tolerate those who are not. She can swallow even "the riot of bad taste, of crude, tawdry and simpering vulgarity, which is the frequent modern contribution to the ancient magnificence of Spanish (as to Italian) churches and cathedrals"—and she swallows it because she has a sense of history. It is the same sense that lets her see Tarraco through Tarragona:

> Tarraco . . . was always full of society and goings on—a Rome from Rome, with its forum and its theatres, its chariot races and its games and its pleasant social intercourse. Augustus had long since made it a pet resort; he stood in relation to it rather as George IV to Brighton, but was more of a god there (as indeed elsewhere) . . .

It is a sense that everyone needs who encounters the "ancient and modern civilisations, ancient and modern savageries, always so closely intertwined in Spain."

LOUIS MACNEICE

A LIBERAL CONSERVATIVE

On Active Service in Peace and War. By HENRY L. STIMSON and MCGEORGE BUNDY. *Hutchinson.* 25s.

The English reader of Mr. Bundy's book is likely to be interested, above all, in three things: in Mr. Stimson's view of President Roosevelt, his view of Mr. Churchill, and his remarkably frank and honest disclosures of his advice to President Truman to drop the two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He deeply admired Mr. Roosevelt's breadth of view, his sense of a great mission, his insight into the largest aspects of strategy, his courage, and his loyalty to those who served him. But he thought the President "the poorest administrator I ever worked under," who chose men badly, and did not know how to use them in a co-ordinated way. He thought that Mr. Roosevelt appointed far too many inexperienced young men on personal grounds and that they then made a chaos of national administrative procedure. But Mr. Stimson emphasises his opinion that "the President had a firm understanding of the facts of war," and that he knew how to put first things first.

On Mr. Churchill, he is especially interesting. With General Marshall, Mr. Stimson was one of the outstanding advocates of the Normandy invasion against Mr. Churchill's zeal for making the thrust up from the Mediterranean the chief basis of operations. But though the persistence with which Mr. Churchill again and again returned to this theme clearly drove Mr. Stimson to the very limits of his patience, he shows throughout these pages a deep admiration for his powers in debate, his ruthless persistence, his "courage never to submit or yield," and his frankness in expressing his point of view. It is, I think, clear that his relations with Mr. Churchill were always those of an official, rather than a personal intimacy, and that he was never quite sure that the President might not be led by the

immense and unrelenting vigour of his persuasive powers, to support policies which diverged from those of General Marshall, in whom Mr. Stimson had absolute faith. It is clear, also, that he never thought that Mr. Churchill had learned the economic lessons of the first world war. He had endless admiration for Mr. Churchill's invincible spirit; but Mr. Churchill's judgment of policy must obviously have seemed to him far less profound than his courage. In the over-all view of what the war involved, he puts President Roosevelt by a long distance in the first place in the building of victory, and I do not think it is any national bias that makes him do so.

Mr. Stimson's own story of why he advised Mr. Truman to drop the atomic bombs on Japan is an honourable examination of his own conscience, as well as a direct and straightforward narrative. It still seems to me to leave three questions unanswered. He does not explain the grounds upon which he accepted, despite his own profound conviction of the need for openness with Russia, Mr. Truman's decision to withhold the secret of the atomic bomb from its leaders. His own words, in a remarkable memorandum of September 11th, 1945, are of supreme significance:

> Those relations (of America with Russia) may be perhaps irretrievably embittered by the way in which we approach the solution of the bomb with Russia. For if we fail to approach them now, and merely continue to negotiate with them, having this weapon rather ostentatiously on our hip, their suspicions, and their distrust of our purposes and motives will increase.

The last four years have been a bitter commentary upon the American failure to accept his view that "the best way to make a man trustworthy is to trust him." Nothing in the explanations he offers after his proposal was rejected justifies his failure to go on insisting on the wisdom of it. Mr. Bundy argues on his behalf that "it was the Russians who ended the wartime friendship." But on Mr. Stimson's own showing that was the probable outcome of a refusal to make the approach he recommended. Everything else that now leads him to regard it as "dangerously one-sided" is rhetoric used to conceal the emergence of the very situation he expected to develop.

The second question he leaves unanswered also concerns Russia. Stalin's agreement to enter the war against Japan was secured at Yalta. When the victors met at Potsdam, they were aware that Japan's navy was worthless, its air force useful only as a suicide squad, and that, though it still possessed a powerful army in Japan, it was trying, through Russia, to secure acceptable terms of surrender. The American plan was to invade Japan in two stages, the lesser island in November, 1945, and the major island in February, 1946; and Mr. Stimson rightly insists that such landings, in which this country had agreed to take its full share, would have inevitably cost very heavy casualties. At Potsdam, it was agreed that Russia should invade Japanese-occupied Manchuria on August 8th. But it was on July 16th that news came of the successful trial explosion of the bomb in New Mexico. It was on August 6th, that the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, and on August 9th that the second was dropped on Nagasaki; Japan accepted unconditional surrender on August 14th, just under a week after the Russian invasion of Manchuria. What Mr. Stimson does not make clear to at least one reader is why, though the success of the test in New Mexico was known over three weeks before the Russian attack, and though this attack took place two days after the first bomb was dropped, no attempt seems to have been made to revise the Yalta decision in the light of the overwhelming new perspective given by the New Mexico test. He explains, logically enough on his own assumptions, why, after Japan rejected the Potsdam ultimatum of July 28th, the bombs were dropped upon the two cities. But he leaves entirely unexplained why, in the light of the knowledge of the success in New Mexico, no discussion about altered plans was made with Russia. Did Mr. Stimson propose such a discussion? If not, why did he not, since his own memoranda from July 2nd onwards prove how aware he was of all the implications of success in New Mexico?

The third question arises out of the second. If the American invasion of Japan, supported by Great Britain was not to begin its first phase until November, why was the Russian attack in Manchuria agreed for August? If we accept his view that the shock of the bombs alone compelled the surrender of Japan without the assault on its mainland, why did he make no effort to have Russian action on Manchuria postponed when, on his own showing, after July 16th, "President Truman was rather losing his interest in knowing the exact date on which they (the Russians) would come into the war"? Mr. Stimson thinks the Russians "may well have been disturbed" by this lack of interest. I should have thought this a supreme example of understatement; and I should have supposed that the disturbance was increased by the fact that, in Mr. Bundy's words, which have Mr. Stimson's express approval, "news of the atomic bomb was received in Potsdam with great and unconcealed satisfaction by Anglo-American leaders. At first blush, it appeared to give democratic diplomacy a badly needed 'equaliser'." No doubt it did. But the last four years have made it abundantly clear that the "great and unconcealed satisfaction" of the President and Mr. Churchill was premature. They sowed the wind at Potsdam. But, for the reasons which Mr. Stimson makes so clear, their peoples have reaped the whirlwind; and none of the *ex post facto* justifications that have been offered by him or others since that time have answered his own memorandum of September 11, 1945. The principle enunciated there—that once the bomb had been successfully made, "the only way you can make a man trustworthy is to trust him"—became a decisive factor in international relations. When that principle was thrust aside, we began to learn in grim and tragic fashion the implications of its antithesis.

HAROLD J. LASKI

THE LETTERS OF A POET

In the Green Tree. By ALUN LEWIS. *Allen & Unwin.* 8s. 6d.

Alun Lewis was born in 1915 of South Wales mining stock; he was educated at local elementary and secondary schools and at the University College of Aberystwith and Manchester University, at both of which he took degrees; he was killed in an accident in 1944 while on active service in Burma. Of his own writing he noted: "It all seemed to mature of a sudden between the winter of 1939 and the following autumn." He left behind him two books of poetry, *Raider's Dawn* and *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets*, and a collection of short stories *The Last Inspection*. Now, posthumously, comes *In The Green Tree*, consisting of half a dozen stories which have already appeared in such magazines as the *Penguin New Writing*, *Horizon* and *The Welsh Review*, a selection of his letters to his wife and to his parents, an introductory sonnet by Mr. Vernon Watkins, an attractive appreciation of his work by Mr. A. L. Rowse and an obituary notice, containing valuable factual information, by Professor Gwyn Jones. Mr. J. Maclaren-Ross's reminiscence of the poet, "Second Lieutenant Lewis," which appeared in the *Penguin New Writing* three years ago, is not included. This is a pity, for it is particularly important as an impression by a man not wholly in sympathy with him either temperamentally or as a writer but who, for all that, still felt the beauty of his character and his integrity.

Beauty of character and integrity: these are the qualities, it seems to me, that shine through Lewis's work. It is possible that, had he lived, he might not have continued as a poet. In the prologue to *Raider's Dawn* he wrote:

> I grind my words like knives on such events
> As I encounter in my peddling round.

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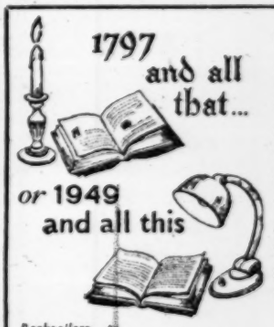

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> But the worn whetstone's whirling face prevents
> The perfect statement of the truths I found.
>
> I've my strength in striving for the vision,
> And with the vision—like old Jacob's stress;
> And I have worked to outline with precision
> Existence in its native nakedness.

And indeed, though he could flash out a superb lyrical image, as in the lines,

> For you abide,
> A singing rib within my dreaming side,

and though he was capable, in the last poem he wrote, "The Jungle," of a most moving sonority and passion of eloquence, his verse, as poetry, seems to me less interesting than his prose. But in both mediums—witness the stories "Ward 'O' 3(b)" and "The Orange Grove" in the present collection—his best work has an imaginative understanding of and compassion for human nature which raise it to an altogether higher level than any other English writing inspired by the war that I know. The letters published in *In the Green Tree* are, therefore, especially valuable as revealing the man behind the work; in them, the beauty of character and integrity that give the poems and stories the stamp of truth are explicit.

Indeed, it may be that these letters will ultimately take a higher place than either the poetry or the stories, for, like Keats's, they point to a maturity beyond anything their author had been able to express in his works, and they make the sense of loss one feels at his death all the keener. Judged simply as letters, as the record of a highly intelligent, highly sensitive man's impressions of the strange surroundings in which he found himself, the Army first of all, then the voyage east in a troop ship, and then the alien otherness of India, they are very good indeed. Lewis's powers of observation and his ability to appreciate what he observed were great. Take, for example, the following passage:

> . . . I've never been able to accept or discover a religion as simple or natural as I need. Last night it seemed that in that rhythm and clangour and steady chant, here was a rhythm of many universes and real truths. We went along the lane, the full moon clear and subdued, and the temple, a bare doorless building with mud floor and a stone with a primitive relief of a deity, was in the village clearing. A wick burnt in a cup of oil before the God, and cast its light upwards up the sinewy long legs of two rows of young men, one along each wall. They moved very little, a step forward and a step back, each man beating his hand cymbals in a rhythm that began slowly and gropingly as if approaching the unhearing God, and then swiftened to a thrilling tempo as the presence was reached and the shout of praise uttered in the final spasm of admission. At the end they cut a coconut in half, putting half before the God and cutting the other half into pieces like communion. Each boy ate a piece, including the tiny bambino who had clapped his little black hands assiduously all through the ritual. He had a peaked cap on because of the cold night and squatted like a little rabbit on the floor. And one of them came out and politely offered Jack and me a piece each. We were conscious of a communion as we ate it—and the God they were worshipping was Ganpait, the elephant, the God of Good Fortune. . . . I feel very heartened by their simple greeting—and glad to find, if only for a few days, a humanity that imperialism and snobbery haven't spoiled.

Imperialism in India, snobbery and the hierarchy of rank in the Army, these depressed him profoundly, for he was a man to whom direct personal relationships mattered above everything else. As he wrote: "Although war is so monstrously arbitrary and violent that personal values seem as futile and ineffectual as 'art for art's sake,' I still hold them, like thousands of others, because there is nothing else to save one or make one worth saving." When he was in Karachi one of his instructors said to him: "You're the most selfish man I've ever met, Lewis. You think the war exists for you to write books about it." Lewis comments: "I hadn't the strength to explain what is instinctive and categorical in me, the need to experience. The writing is only a proof of the experience that's all." He was in full pursuit of integrity; "and I discount the other qualities in people far too ruthlessly if they lack that fundamental sincerity and wholeness." It was the need for experience, the pursuit of integrity, which led him to refuse a staff job with greatly increased pay. "I wanted," as he said, "to be with my own Welsh boys, though they have no roofs or hot baths or cinemas or bearers to polish and fetch." It wasn't that he was sentimental about them; the man who could write of his fellow private soldiers in his poem "The Soldier", "The cheapest dance song utters all they feel," cannot be accused of that. But he did possess a sense of communion with them, "all of us cherishing the same simplicities, afraid to lose the same things, and willing to share the same tasks and the same anxieties." "Will we," he goes on, "get the same reward? No." The notion of injustice haunted him. There was nothing he could do about it except strive to be the voice of the inarticulate. As a soldier, whether private or officer, he was doubtless an oddity. With his intransigent integrity he couldn't have been anything else. Mr. Maclaren-Ross recalls that when they met in England, just before Lewis sailed for India, the poet gave him his short stories to read:

> I sent the stories back to Lewis next day by an orderly who happened to be taking a message to the Welsh H.Q. He returned with an odd story. He had accosted a fatigue party who were coal-heaving outside—why, at that time of year, I can't imagine. He asked where Mr. Lewis could be found. One of the fatigue party, in shirt-sleeves and covered with coal dust, had turned and said: "Here I am." This had so shaken the orderly that he'd delivered the packet of MSS. without remembering to salute. I don't suppose that Lewis minded.

That is the Alun Lewis the letters in this book reveal.

WALTER ALLEN

A BRAVE BUSINESS, BUT BITTER

The Adventure of Publishing. By MICHAEL JOSEPH. *Wingate.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

Many a wistful glance must have been cast in recent years, by many a novice publisher, at the firm that Michael Joseph founded in the years between the wars, years that saw the disappearance of one hopeful imprint after another. Here, it seemed, was a fellow convict who, like them, had mistaken the prison doors for the gates to Eldorado, but had almost miraculously earned full remission of sentence, and had never slipped back. How did one become a publisher liked by the trade, approved by the authors, with a steady output of best-sellers that were certainly not tripe, who never strayed, blundering and starry-eyed, into paths that were not fully charted on his map, and had resisted the impulse to expand his list beyond the point where it could retain personality and where each author on it could be given careful personal attention?

Alas, in *The Adventure of Publishing*, Mr. Joseph's so hopefully named lecture to those still serving sentence, they will find little to encourage them and no tips at all for quick get-aways. He repeats all the hard, basic truths that those who were publishing under pre-war conditions knew to be only thinly concealed by the abnormal war-time boom, and warns that, with enormously increased production costs and no comparable increase in the price of books, we may now be heading for an even more dangerous state of affairs. I felt myself wanting to exclaim "Hear, hear," time after time, as I read through his judgments on the follies we have all committed, the illusions we have all entertained at one time and another, publishers, booksellers, agents, critics and authors. Does press advertising sell books? In Mr. Joseph's opinion, in nine cases out of ten it is what A. says to B. that ultimately makes or mars a book's sales, and the only use of advertising is to flatter authors and establish an imprint with them and with the trade. And yet competitive advertising was the ruin of many a

young house with good prospects before the war, and may be so again when newsprint becomes more abundant.

Is over-production the curse of the book trade? A thousand times yes, and yet publishers never ceased during the war years to demand the abolition of that restriction of paper which rescued them from the pit of bankruptcy towards which they were hurtling in the late Thirties; and Mr. Joseph, whom over-production bothers more than anything else, has to admit that an intelligent publisher with a yearly list of fifty books is more likely to survive than one with a yearly list of fifteen. Would reduced prices increase the sales of good books? Mr. Joseph points out that the increase in prices of books during the last ten years has kept way behind the increase in costs of production, and asserts emphatically that to publish a first novel at five shillings—or even at three and six if that were possible—would increase the sales little if at all and only make more certain the publishers' loss; and yet there are vocal critics who continue to claim, in the face of all the evidence, that books are too costly. Are the booksellers a vital link between publishers and public, on whose enthusiasm and discerning interest the health of the whole trade depends? The answer is self-evident, and yet Mr. Joseph is forced to declare: "I never go anywhere without sampling the local bookshops, not as a publisher but as an ordinary member of the public; and again and again I have been depressed by the apathetic attitude of booksellers and their assistants." Does serious publishing need the complementary activity of serious reviewing? Mr. Joseph produces some remarkable examples of books that have had phenomenal sales with few reviews and fewer favourable; and yet anyone who has made it an objective to establish a list of literary value knows how important those serious reviews are, and how rare the critics are who have the equipment to judge a book's significance and at the same time resist the temptation to be clever at the book's expense. Mr. Joseph bitterly quotes Frank Swinnerton's bitter remark: "It is a sign indeed of the greatest success to be reviewed adversely in every paper in England."

What are the remedies? To one of Mr. Joseph's observations (he devotes a whole chapter to it), I gave perhaps my loudest "hear, hear": that the B.B.C., in spite of the Third Programme, does far too little to bring the important books to the notice of the public, or to maintain even a small part of that sifting of the chaff from the grain for which the weeklies, even with reduced paper supplies, still acknowledge their responsibility. One may, indeed, say that considerably more was done before the days of the Third Programme, when outstanding critics such as Harold Nicolson and Desmond MacCarthy had their regular Home Service talks. Shame on Broadcasting House. Mr. Joseph's other suggestions, however, seemed to me more dubious. He proposes an increase in the price of library subscriptions and a parallel increase in the price at which books are sold to the "Big Four" and their lesser colleagues of the library business. It is startling to realise that an average year's subscription costs scarcely more than it did a hundred years ago—less, if the change in the value of money is taken into account; but I cannot myself see the "Big Four" putting up prices, which they pride themselves on having kept so low, in order to allow publishers to sell them books at a *smaller* discount than they give to ordinary booksellers. Mr. Joseph's other suggestion is that a panel nominated by the Society of Authors, the National Book League, The Publishers' Association and the Associated Booksellers should give or withhold their approval from every book to be published, thus making the publishing of tripe for the sake of turnover more difficult. Imagination boggles at the abuses to which this system might lend itself, even if it were workable. These are counsels of despair.

There is, then, it seems, no escape, except in the gradual education of publishers to greater common sense, restraint and solidarity. I would myself make Mr. Joseph's book compulsory reading for those innumerable youthful fanatics who are determined to get into publishing at all costs. But will even the solemn warnings of his book make any difference? Will they listen when he tells them that authors are "as superstitious as Irish peasants," and quotes the late Mr. Ivor Nicholson as declaring that he would not start a new firm with less than £100,000, and only undertake with that capital to establish an imprint in the first five years? There is in publishing, more than in any other business, the intoxication of gambling, and the kind of gambling where skill counts as well as luck. No one has yet learnt how to cure a gambler, except by ruin; and when for a keen and intelligent person who loves books the excitement is added of possibly discovering a brilliant author, of influencing the future of literature, his case is pretty well hopeless. Grant Richards, says Mr. Joseph, ought to have made a fortune; he had probably more flair than any other publisher within memory, and yet he had to endure one financial crisis after another. "A brave business, but bitter," was how he summed up his profession.

JOHN LEHMANN

DU CÔTÉ DE CHEZ BEAVERBROOK

The Land of Look Behind. By W. J. BROWN. *Latimer House.* 9s. 6d.

Jamaican Journey. By W. J. BROWN. *Allen & Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

In the winters of 1946–47 and 1947–48 Mr. W. J. Brown, M.P., went to Jamaica to stay with Lord Beaverbrook. He wrote a book about each visit, and the two volumes now appear simultaneously from different publishers. The more recent one—*The Land of Look Behind*—is the better value because Lord Beaverbrook makes a personal appearance in it. In *Jamaican Journey* he is laid up in Florida with a patch on the lung and can communicate with his guest only by cable and telephone.

First, then, for those who, like myself, find this gnomish, dæmonic tycoon a subject of irresistible fascination, let me skim off the Beaverbrook. There is not very much of him because Mr. Brown stayed barely a week, but what there is is fairly tasty. One or two flashes on the international situation:

> Beaverbrook thinks civilisation doomed. The world, he thinks, is bent on suicide. . . The bomb will be dropped in less than ten years time. . . . The situation is as hopeless as the situation in Germany in 1913, when we sent Haldane to try to mend things.

He also thinks (December 22nd, 1947) that "we're treating the Russians very badly," and lists a number of reasons why Stalin "has cause to be frightened and suspicious."

And he tells an amusing story of how Roosevelt used his stamp album as an umbrella to stop Churchill talking about the war.

That famous cyclothymic temperament may be observed oscillating. On Christmas morning Lord Beaverbrook remarks to his guest on the "meaninglessness and purposelessness of life," and tells "an infinitely sad story" about his Presbyterian father's lack of faith. By dinner-time, however (present, the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland and Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Kersh), he is in an elated phase again,

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"singing the Scots metrical version of the twenty-third psalm." Another evening he indulges in his favourite pastime of relating bible stories "as if they were current events."

He several times displays his characteristic kindness (it may be easy for millionaires to play the fairy godmother, but the fact remains that Beaverbrook does so far more often than most); for instance, on hearing that a girl cashier is short on her accounts, he slips a ten-pound note through the grille. And he is genuinely concerned at the appalling poverty of the Jamaicans.

And that, apart from a glimpse of how he conducts his correspondence—on to dictaphone records which are flown to London to be transcribed—is about all we are vouchsafed.

Living *de-luxe* during his short stays, Mr. Brown was naturally not able to see much of the life of the island. In any case his principal subject is himself. A large part of both books consists of his shipboard diary, in which he animadverts freely on anything that comes into his head—from House of Commons reminiscences to the technique of holystoning the deck. Reading this uninhibited flux, one realises that there is nothing accidental about his transformation from a Left-wing extremist, who cursed MacDonald as a traitor, into a Shoe Lane publicist specialising in anti-Socialism. Nor is it merely a case of the reformed poacher making the best gamekeeper; but rather the late flowering of an inherent talent. For Mr. Brown is full of that peculiar, heightened self-consciousness which is such an asset in popular journalism. He puts himself across with positively maniacal zest, whether he is getting "fellow passengers to share in the Yoga exercises which I practice, and which stretch every muscle in the body and make one break out in a profuse perspiration," or saying good-bye to them at the end of the voyage, when: "I kissed all the women without exception, and gathered an astonishing variety of lipstick marks on my countenance," or even when teaching young Jamaican Negroes to sing spirituals. And he has the gift of readability to a high degree. Even when he is writing sheer nonsense, subscribing enthusiastically to the Jamaican vulgar error that scorpions suckle their young, or making the following chuckle-headed comparison of the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.:

> America is like a young boxer, strong, hefty and generous. Russia is like a crafty old ring-man, weaker, older, but vastly more experienced, and utterly devoid of any generosity nor any respect for the Queensberry Rules. When two such men meet in the ring the older and the craftier frequently wins.

one's eye is still remorselessly button-hooked and dragged along the lines of type. One reads on, despite periodic agonies of embarrassment, making plentiful additions to one's *sottiserie*.

MAURICE RICHARDSON

NEW NOVELS

Conversation in Sicily. By ELIO VITTORINI. *Lindsay Drummond & Wilfrid David.* 8s. 6d.

First on the Rope. By R. FRISON-ROCHE, translated by JANET ADAM SMITH. *Methuen.* 10s. 6d.

Clock Without Hands. By GERALD KERSH. *Heinemann.* 9s. 6d.

"A novel," wrote Schopenhauer, "will be of a high and noble order, the more it represents of inner, and the less it represents of outer, life; and the ratio between the two will supply a means of judging any novel, of whatever kind, from *Tristram Shandy* down to the crudest and most sensational tale of knight or robber . . . Skill consists in setting the inner life in motion with the smallest possible array of circumstances; for it is this inner life which really excites our interest."

Schopenhauer would have found merits in *Conversation in Sicily:* among them being a picaresque construction which reduces the array of circumstances to a minimum. Silvestro, the narrator, learns that his father has deserted his mother, who lives in Sicily, where Silvestro himself was brought up until the age of fifteen. He travels from the north of Italy to visit his mother; the journey is recounted in terms of conversation with the people he meets on his way. In Sicily the conversation continues. Silvestro talks with a knife-grinder, with his mother, his mother's friends, the ghost of his dead brother. His father turns up again. Silvestro leaves on his return journey.

This is the "outer life" of the book, but it is upon the inner life that it opens, and it opens with considerable power:

> That winter I was haunted by abstract furies . . . some sort of furies concerning the doomed human race.
>
> That was the terrible part: the quietude of my hopelessness; to believe mankind to be doomed, and yet to feel no fever to save it, but instead to nourish a desire to succumb with it.

This terse exactitude, this shorthand note about despair, occurring on the first page of the first of its author's works to be translated into English, adds to the hope aroused by Mr. Stephen Spender's introduction, the hope that in *Conversation in Sicily* we may have found a novel "of a high and noble order." Mr. Spender makes some claims for it which make it clear that he is of this opinion. He states that "the whole of Vittorini's sensibility is directed away from himself".

> His hero, travelling in the train, walking on the island, and staying in his mother's house, is a very sensitive instrument, combination of microphone and microscope, entirely there for the purpose of understanding and clarifying others. It is the others who speak and exist through the hero who, when they thus speak and exist, seems to make an added lucidity for them by eliminating every shadow of himself.

If I understand Mr. Spender correctly, he considers that, by using this particular kind of instrument, Signor Vittorini has developed the technique of the novel. I cannot accept this: with a hero so impersonal, so abstract, we are really getting back to the impersonal narrator who stands outside the book altogether, that is to say, to the novelist, the writer himself. But Mr. Spender associates with his view of Silvestro as a technical instrument other and more important claims. The abstract furies which have made Silvestro lose apparent interest in everything have really made him lose interest in himself.

> Who can say that they have not turned him into a modern Saint? Nor that the subjective, self-conscious hero or heroine of the isolated sensibility of Samuel Butler, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Hemingway, is not the first stage of a pilgrimage, which leaves to the abstract hero, who has sacrificed his own personality on the altar of all humanity, nothing but the voice of that humanity?

The answer is that no one can say. Silvestro is too shadowy a figure, too dim, too elusive, to bear the weight of these questions. Too much has been sacrificed on the altar; what is left is not a voice, but a ghost; and to bring the names of Samuel Butler and James Joyce into a discussion of this book is only doing a disservice to a writer who is simply not in their class. Yet he is a writer of some talent. He communicates the courage with which the Sicilian peasants face their miserable poverty; the drama of comradeship opposed to exploitation is something which he understands as Silone understands it. As to the greater drama which he touches, the drama of despair and faith, he has not the creative vitality to fill it with life. The thought is not clear and the emotions are not rendered with force. The end of the book is, by comparison with its opening, weak and obscure. In short, while this book has some interesting qualities, (and was well worth translating) it comes nowhere near achieving the stature, the solidity, the coherent power, which are required in a major work.

With *First on the Rope* we are in a completely different field. This is a novel about mountaineering; the author was once a guide at Chamonix; he knows what he is writing about, and he writes well enough to have sold 400,000 copies in France. This is not surprising. So many books are written about mountaineering, and so few tell us what we want to know. Because here too (if our interest is not purely technical) it is the inner life which interests us; not the Zmutt ridge, but what it really feels like to be on it; not the technicalities, but what it feels like to be a master of them. This M. Frison-Roche manages to convey to us. His characters are professional mountaineers, guides, candidates, or porters. They are devoted, enthusiastic, professional literally to their finger tips, but without any of the boring mysticism which so often appears like mildew on mountaineering literature. They live among the mountains all the year round, and M. Frison-Roche presents them to us as farmers as well as mountaineers. The plot of the book (about a young man, Pierre, who wants to be a guide, has an accident, and thereafter has to overcome vertigo) is elementary, but since it provides all the climbing anyone could want, quite adequate. There is enough technicality to keep devotees happy, but other people can understand what is going on. And the nerviness, skill, concentration and triumph of mountaineering are all there.

Mr. Gerald Kersh is, in the scene of contemporary writing, a somewhat ambiguous figure. A popular and successful writer, he has sometimes been suspected of being a crypto-highbrow. He has, however, in recent years, almost entirely dispelled these suspicions, and of the three short novels which compose his present book, only one is at all likely to revive old doubts. The title story is a poor thing indeed, completely unconvincing, superficial, and competent only after the fashion of a man who has published fifteen books and can bash his way through another story somehow or other. The last of the three, "Fairy Gold," is a piece of high-grade entertainment about a young couple who are hoaxed by a malignant friend into believing that they have inherited a fortune. They borrow on the strength of this, have a gay week-end,

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and by a turn of chance manage to get away with it. I don't suppose one is really meant to *believe* in the various tricks and turns of the plot, but you can believe in the characters, and the story is well-told and amusing. The middle story of the three is a little puzzling. A boy from an orphanage is treated with an easy sentimental kindness at the house of a wealthy literary man at which he calls to deliver a leaflet.

> He paused to think, and Betty Lou said, in a voice that trembled with pity: "I promise you no one shall know if you eat your strawberries and cream."

On the strength of this the boy goes back to the house when he has run away from the orphanage and is in difficulties. This is too much; strawberries and cream are all very well, but Peter John's work mustn't be disturbed. (Betty Lou, in a passage which has real satirical bite, claims that she "has denied herself motherhood for it".) They turn the boy over to the police. The puzzling thing is that this story, which has a serious subject and a point of view, is not so well-written, so convincing, or even perhaps as subtle as "Fairy Gold." Mr. Kersh remains still slightly ambiguous: let us put him down as an entertainer, but an entertainer with yearnings.

J. D. SCOTT

MODERN AMERICAN PAINTING

Milestones of American Painting in Our Century. By FREDERICK S. WIGHT. Introduction by Lloyd Goodrich. *Parrish.* 21s.

One of Mr. Wight's contributions to the *Journal of Aesthetics* was the best piece of writing in English on the work of a living artist that it has ever been my delight to read. Being both a painter and a novelist, he is one of those rare writers on art who, like Ruskin, combine a first-hand knowledge of the artist's problems with a gift for expressing aesthetic perceptions and judgments—and even theories—in vivid imagery and really moving prose rhythms; and who—because of this fusion of talents—writes poetically about the content of a work of art without allowing poetic exaltation to become disproportionate to the stature of his subject. In the book under review, Mr. Wight is a little subdued—doubtless because it is addressed to the general reader. He seldom ventures to use the psycho-analytic method of criticism which he can handle so imaginatively yet judiciously, and he restrains his literary virtuosity. Still, he has produced a useful and entertaining guide to modern American painting—balanced and discerning in its evaluations, rich in insight into the relationship of the pictures to the social and economic conditions of the age, and occasionally hinting at his powers as a writer, as when thus gently chastising the group of realists known as "The Eight":

> They had observed with a fresh intensity, but they believed that reality was there before them to be caught on the wing, as though the painter were a good shot.

Fifty artists are represented in this book, each by a single reproduction—twelve of them in tolerable colour. It is inevitable that the reviewer will quarrel with the anthologist. But it does seem worth while to express regret that Mr. Wight should have found no room for Baziotes, Motherwell, Pollock and Gorki, and some astonishment that he should have left out Matta. Where objective criticism can be made is of Mr. Wight's selection of European expatriates, which appears to be quite arbitrary. The inclusion of Berman and Tchelichew, and a remark that Beckmann has not been in the States long enough to be considered an American painter, together suggest that candidates qualify for inclusion on residential, not stylistic, grounds. The criterion is a dubious one, but it could at least have been applied consistently, and Dali, Ernst and Tanguy not omitted.

American art is essentially romantic, Mr. Wight maintains, and the plates confirm it. Even Cubism becomes, in the hands of Feininger, Demuth and Davis, an expression of the romantic spirit. And if a mainstream is discernible among the currents of modern American painting, it is surely Expressionism (as, indeed, the German or Jewish ancestry of so many American artists would lead us to expect). To-day an increasing number of American Expressionists seem to prefer an abstract language of form to a representational. This, in some respects, is regrettable, because the outstanding virtue of the American tradition has, I think, been its communicativeness, its accessibility. There the chasm between artist and public has been far less wide than in Europe. Though the better American artists are in revolt against the *status quo*, theirs is a revolt after the fashion of Daumier rather than of Picasso. They are in revolt against society, yet identify themselves with the people (which Picasso may do in his political pronouncements but—in common with all romantic *geniuses*—does not do in his artistic practice). They are not prophets, but journalists. Their art is, in fact, democratic. A number of them have drawn comic strips: Feininger, Calder, Kuhn, Marsh. Many of them have been commissioned to paint frescoes for public buildings. Above all, they have tried to interpret the life and aspirations of common folk, rejecting of their own accord "bourgeois formalism" in favour of social criticism. It is where Wall Street governs that Socialist Realism thrives.

DAVID SYLVESTER

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

(*concluded*)

Vocal. MOZART: *Idomeneo*—"Frühlingsdüfte" (Erna Berger / Philharmonia / Krips. DB6617). This beautifully peaceful, but not particularly inspired, aria calls out some lovely singing from Mme Berger; but the recording is not impeccable and the quality deteriorates appreciably towards the centre of the disc. WAGNER: *Tannhäuser — Elizabeth's Prayer* (Flagstad/Philharmonia/Dobrowen. DB6795). This piece, with its rows of minims, has always been a favourite of sopranos with big, steady voices. Still, I hope they will forgive me for calling it dull and sanctimonious. Mme Flagstad does the expected thing, although once or twice she is slightly below the note. The recording is competent. VERDI: *Traviata*—"Dei miei spiriti bollenti"; MASSENET: *Manon*—"Ah! dispar, vision" (Di Stefano/LSO/Erede. DB6868). The aria from *Traviata* is sung with real *élan*. Some of the final notes catch the microphone, otherwise Di Stefano's heroic tenor is given a spacious, well balanced recording. "Ah! dispar," however, will not do at all. It is fatal to this aria to "scoop" the initial phrases. The singer overdoes the emotion, too—slops right over; and the recording is cramped. Gigli's rendering is still the best available. OFFENBACH: *La Périchole*—Excerpts; *Tales of Hoffmann*—"Belle nuit, o nuit d'amour" (Jennie Tourel. LB79–80). In the airs from *La Périchole* Miss Tourel shows her command of gallic lightness and humour. It is all deliciously funny. The *Barcarolle*, on the other hand, is shorn of all glamour. The orchestral part in this record comes out especially well. DONIZETTI: *Betly*—"In questo semplice modesto asilo" (Carosio/Philharmonia/Gennai. DA1910). This yodelling song from a forgotten opera, the alternative title of which is "The Swiss Chalet," is amusing rather than beautiful. I cannot say I think Mme Carosio makes a success of it; her delivery is awkward and constrained. Pathos suits this singer better than *espièglerie*. SCHUBERT: *Heidenröslein* and *Wiegenlied* (Seefried. LB78). An indispensable disc. Mme Seefried's lovely soft tone is well set off by an admirably well balanced recording. SCHUBERT: *Abschied* and *In der Ferne* (Max Lightegg acc. Georg Solti. K2172). The singer's style is anything but subtle, but his voice is clear and vibrant. In *Abschied* (poem by Rellstab, not Mayrhofer) he omits the second verse. Both songs are sung in the original keys—a distinct advantage. Admirable accompaniment. Good balance. WOLF: *Epiphanias: Auf*

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RESEARCH

dem grünen Balkon: Ach, des Knaben Augen (Frederick Fuller. C3851). Mr. Fuller's smooth tone and intelligent phrasing must always give pleasure, and do so here; but his voice has a nasal quality better suited to Latin music than to German. His rendering of *Auf dem grünen Balkon* is really too straight: the humour of the poem is quite lost. *Ach, des Knaben* goes much better, and—apart from the high B flat, which seems to be outside the singer's range—*Epiphanias* is admirably sung. The recording is excellent. This seems a good opportunity for me to call attention (not for the first time) to the folly of issuing songs—especially those in a foreign language—without a leaflet giving the text. To anyone who does not know the words these three Lieder must seem obscure to a degree. HANDEL: *Semele*—"Where'er you walk" (Richard Lewis); *Xerxes*—"Ombra mai fu" (Kathleen Ferrier/LSO/Sargent. K2135). HANDEL: *Messiah*—"I know that my Redeemer liveth" (Ada Alsop/LSO/Sargent. K2137). HANDEL: *Alexander's Feast*—"Revenge, Timotheus cries" (Trevor Anthony/LSO/Sargent. K2138). I still prefer MacCormack's record of "Where'er you walk," which is paired with the lovely "Caro amore" from Handel's *Floridante*. Mr. Lewis has an agreeable voice, but his phrasing leaves a lot to be desired. In "Ombra mai fu" Miss Ferrier has to compete with Caruso, Gigli, Schipa, and Tauber (all on their toes, too!); but she succeeds in bringing something of her own to this hackneyed but superb aria. Her tone is steady and plangent as a cor anglais, and avoids the hollowness which sometimes disturbs the affecting beauty of her singing. A very well made record. In "I know that my Redeemer liveth" Miss Alsop does not quite recapture the radiant purity, nor yet the steadiness of tone and phrasing, which made her first Handel record so bewitching. But to those who want the aria by itself I recommend this disc, since Isobel Baillie is not quite at her best in either her separate record or that from the complete set (Col). "Revenge, Timotheus cries" is not very tidily sung, and the recording of the orchestra (excellent in the former discs) is unpleasantly metallic.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Week-end Competitions

No. 1,008

Set by Richard Lister

The usual prizes are offered for a four-line epigram in rhyming verse on the Old English Inn buffet cars coming into service with British Railways. Entries by June 21st.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 1,005

Set by Thomas Smallbones

Restoration dramatists used to give their characters names expressive of their personalities (e.g., Lady Sneerwell, Sir Tunbelly Clumsy). The usual prizes are offered for the *dramatis personæ*, named in this way for a modern play, suitably named, set in either Whitehall or a University city. Entries by May 31st.

Report by Thomas Smallbones

It would have been possible to quote two or three felicities from almost any one of the shoal of entries. The best title came from Pinder Vaughan. "The Eternal Quadrangle"; the single happiest character was Thomas Chitty's Vice-chancellor of a University, "Lord Windy of the Western Ideal." "Lord Leak, a former Minister," by Agag was another good invention. For simplicity was what really told in the end and the lists as a whole suffered from an indigestible surface of ingenuity. So, the minor characters were often the best. Especially the pairs that are a characteristic feature of these *dramatis personæ*: for instance as clerks, Dilly and Dally, Pink and Buff, Plodder and Crawl, Slow and Slop, office boys, Smear and Smudge, telephone girls Fogfile and Flap-phone, typists, Rosy Rackett and Clara Click, proctor's men, Scoop and Grab. Among the students I liked Benzedrine Blunt, Mournful Doubleplough, Frank Libido, The Honorable Quarter Vellum, Wouldbe Zulcika, Fabian Dawn, Lady Honor Back.

Overdoing it was the trap into which the majority of competitors fell and this is evident even in the runners up. J. Rothman, John Fry, David Marcham, C. Porter, J. P. Stevenson were close on the heels of the winners. I award thirty shillings each to Frances Heritage, D. R. Climie and Eva M. Steinicke and a half guinea consolation prize to the other four printed.

THE STATE SCHOLAR
or Taste Not The Pierian Spring

EARNEST HOPE: The State Scholar.
FRANK PLOUGHWORTHY: A student from his home town.
JUNE BALL: Ploughworthy's cousin.
SLIPPER-SNOOZE: His Tutor.
HORNBLOWER, BORROWMORE, ARGUMENT, DRINKALL } Undergraduates with whom he shares a caravan.
HONOR BRIGHT, FANCY FREE } Students at Lady Beegood Hall.
THE HON. COWARD COLDSTREAM: His rowing coach.
STINGY: His tobacconist.
SALLY FORTH: His tobacconist's assistant.
JUSTINIUS HUMDRUM: Master of his college.
CHERRY TART: A helper at the Civic Restaurant.
THE REV. WILBY-HIRD: Chaplain to his college.
CLAIRE DELUNE . . . (?)
PROCTOR
GRACE: His Mother.

FRANCES HERITAGE

THE DANCING MASTERS
or New Tunes on an Old Fiddle.

SCENE: Whitehall and environs.
DAISY LACKSICAL: A simple post-office clerk, in love with
SIR HARRY SQUAREPEG: An honest under-secretary, in the hands of
SIR FITZWELL ROUNDHOLE: A timesaver, half-brother to
LADY TANSY TANGLEWIT, M.P.: A lady of fashion, in love with
LORD REELING REDTAPE: A tea taker, Minister to Sir Fitzwell, and in love with
MRS. FORMSBY DAMNED: An Opposition member, in love with
LORD MALCONTENT: A newspaper owner, in love with Lord Malcontent.
SIR JOLLIOT BEAMING: A Press representative, nephew to Lady Tansy.
"BEAU" PEEP: A Whitehall gossip writer.
PALMSBY GREASE: Follower to Lord Reeling.
SNARL: A party whip.
PANIC, PURGE } Members of M.I.5, disguised as one another.
DUPE: An honest taxpayer, loved by none.
Housewives, typists, white elephants, etc.

D. R. CLIMIE

THE LADY'S NOT FOR LEARNINGE
A Comedie in Five Acts set in the Precincts of MAUDLIN COLLEGE

EDWARD NUMSKULL: Profesour of Philosophie, in love with Miss Joy Giver.
DR. QUIBLER: His Asistante, in love with Mrs. Numskull.
SCRUMPOX: Captaine of the Ruger Teame, naturale son of Profesour Numskull, in love with Nell Knightley.
UNDERWIT AND CRAMWELL: Too scolares in love with Miss Joy Giver.
MISS JOY GIVER: A young lady student in love with Scrumpox.
MRS. NUMSKULL: Wife of Profesour Numskull, not in love with anyone.
NELL KNIGHTLEY: A pretty chamber-maid, alwaies in love with someone.
Other Scolares, Savantes and Servantes.

EVA M. STEINICKE

THE BOW'S STRATEGEM

SIR CHERWELL CHEERWELL: A Gentleman of a Sporting Temper, and a Patron of Rowing.
STEERWELL CHEERWELL: His Son, and Coxswain in the Dagdalen College boat.
THOMAS SMALLBONES: His rival in love, and Coxswain in the Feble College Boat.
CRABBE: Bow in the Feble College Boat, friend to Smallbones, of a contriving Wit.
CATCHPOLE: A Punter, in the pay of Crabbe.
EPIGRAM: A pert young Gentleman, but newly come to the University.
MARGEFINGERS: A Cricket Blue.
WINTERSKILL: A Rugger Blue.
WAFFLE: A Don.
LADY CHEERWELL: Wife to Sir Cherwell.
MISS NYLON: A Lady of Fashion, contracted to young Cheerwell.
MISS BLUESTOCKING: A Lady of Wit.
MRS. STEAL: A Landlady.

RAY DAWSON

A TAR TURNS RED
A political Melodrama.

HARTLEY RIGHTENOUGH, D.S.O. AND BAR: Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, war-time Destroyer Captain and suspected fellow traveller.
THE RT. HON. ALECK STARBOARD TACK, M.P.: First Lord of the Admiralty.
SIR ANDREW BOWLER-BUMPER: Chairman of the Purge Committee.
ADML. OF THE FLEET SIR BOLEYNE-POINT, ADML. SIR GENTLY SIMMERIN, MR. TANGLEWOOD TAPER } Members of the Purge Committee.
CAPT. PRIOR-LITTLE, LT. CMDR. PEEK-AYLOTT } Seconded to M.I.5.
JACK STROP, TOM BOLA } Friends of Hartley Rightenough.
EILEENOVA BAKVAARTS: Confidential Secretary to Hartley Rightenough, self-styled anti-Communist.
FLOSSIE GOTOBED, HELEN FARLEY-FRAYLE } Typists, secretly in love with Hartley Rightenough.
VIRGINIA CREEPER: Executive Officer, officially attached to Hartley Rightenough.
FRANCES FREEBODY: Administrative Officer, passionately persuing H.R.
ANTHEA TOPDRAWER: Niece to Sir Andrew Bowler-Bumper, engaged to H.R.
HORACE STONEBOTTOM, GEO. SLOW, WILL STOP } Messengers.
MRS. SCRUBLITTLE: A charwoman.

FRANK DUNNILL

THE THIRD DEGREE

GRANTAID: An undergraduate of St. Valentine's College.
TORPID: His friend, a Rowing Blue, vowed to misogyny until his training period be over.
DR. HURRYTHROUGH VESPERS: Dean of the College.
FLATULENT: A Domestic Bursar, a petty-minded fellow, in love with Analgesia.
SOMNOLENT: A Tutor.
POSTURE, MOONING: } Undergraduates of a dramatic turn, in love with themselves and each other.
TRUNDLE: A Porter.
EXTRANEOUS: A deus ex machina, uncle to Grantaid.
ANALGESIA: Daughter to Dr. Vespers, a medical student, beloved of Grantaid.
FABIA: Her confidante, a foolish girl lacking of balance or discrimination, reads Economics, in love with Torpid.
MRS. MATCHWITS GAMELY: Principal of a Women's College, has set her cap at Vespers.
College servants, dramatic critics, psycho-neurotics, etc.

J. G. BOWEN

THE UNDAUNTED GALLANT
or Whitehall Besieged

Dramatis personæ, in order of appearance.

GLOOM: A Doorman.
SMEAR: An office cleaner.
MR. STUBBORN: A gentleman seeking an Interview.
KNITTER AND NATTER: Typists.
FOURISH AND ELEVENSES: Lady clerks.
SIR FINICAL APHIDES, O.B.E., F.R.H.S.: A Civil Servant.
MR. CARBON: His assistant.
EVERWRONG: A citizen.
SIR JOVIAL SQUANDER: A Minister.
MR. CONTACT: His Secretary.
MRS. APHRODITE MINK: His Doxy.
AMNESIA APATHY: A young person at the Switchboard.

The Masque in Act 2 represents Sir Jovial, led by Bridge, Golf and other allegorical characters, to meet his cronies. Coins and Favours pass from hand to hand, and Mrs. Aphrodite partners each in turn.

ESMÉ KELLY

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